Institutional culture and the Government of Siberia : empire, rebellion, and the Cossacks, 1598-1725

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Institutional Culture and the Government of Siberia

Empire, Rebellion, and the Cossacks, 1598-1725

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Abstract

This study considers the government of Siberia in the seventeenth century within the context of recent scholarship on the Muscovite empire which has shown that the influence of the nobles and the provincial gentry recovered during the seventeenth century following the disruption of the Time of Troubles. This thesis demonstrates that there were groups beyond the nobles that could also influence government policies. The tsar depended on the Siberian Cossacks to protect the transports of valuable furs throughout the vast insecure overlapping frontiers of the steppe and the north of Siberia to Moscow. Their specific form of organisation, a temporary primary group, accounts for Cossack cost efficiency and military prowess that no regular force could beat under the conditions of isolation and the superiority of the nomads. In Siberia, central authority was even more restricted than elsewhere since repression by an army would have depleted the fur resources. During frequent and enduring rebellions, the Cossacks deposed the governor when they perceived an incapable leader or wanted to negotiate the implicit terms of trade. In a phenomenon which was rare in the early modern period, they received salary on a regular basis, which was sufficient to support a family. Flexible government grants for up to three years in advance and tax exemption, enhanced competition and explain the rapid expansion of a cash-starved economy. Discussing, writing and signing collective petitions during rebellions established a new Cossack group that organised around a specific aim – to stand in for each other during investigation and display loyalty while upholding staunchly their own ends. Limited, but vigorous public control helps to explain both enhanced sensitivity to administrative maltreatment and effective tax collection that have been noticed before but explained exclusively in unsuitable modern terms of efficiently centralised administrative agency. By means of analysis of institutional mechanisms, the thesis investigates the Cossacks' language and symbolic systems to establish the way in which the fledgling, albeit limited Siberian public spheres integrated into the autocratic empire.

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Introduction

Aims and Objectives

The history of the Russian Empire has recently been extensively reappraised and the role of imperial expansion has been reconsidered as an explanatory tool for explaining Russia's historical development since the reign of Ivan IV the Terrible.[1] The Empire has been reinvestigated from the multi-ethnic and ceremonial point of view, and from the perspective of international relations and power politics.[2] However, the question how this large empire functioned internally, and how its parts interacted in the seventeenth century, is still largely neglected, although already in the eighteenth century the German academic in the service of the tsar, G.F. Müller expressed his opinion that the Siberian frontier towns merely executed government orders, looking after the tasks of defense and the collection of the fur tax.[3] Apart from such one-sided praise of tsarist power, the question of how the empire was effectively governed – apart from its own claims of power – was not acceptable later among nineteenth-century Russian scholars. Even for its opponents, whether before or after the revolution, there was no point questioning the effectiveness of the tsar's power, and those who criticised Russia from a regional point of view kept to Solov'ev's and Kliuchevskii's theory of colonising Russia – instead of the state, a uniform mass of ordinary people was cast in the role of the hero that left uniform, "grey" traces while colonising empty spaces; non-Russian imperial subjects were mostly treated as inexistent, especially in Siberia. Thus for Golovachev, "typical for Siberian history, the most important agent of which was the mass of people (*narodnaia massa*), were the...facts of normal, daily life, the grey facts of life,

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[1] Overview of literature: Aust, Martin, "Writing the Empire", *European Review of History* vol.10,2 (2003), 375-391; Hosking, Geoffrey, *Russia. People and Empire*, 1552-1917, London 1997; Schmidt, Christoph, *Russische Geschichte 1547-1917*, München 2003, 1-2

[2] Wortman, Richard, *Scenarios of Power*, vol.1 Princeton 1995. See Dominic Lieven's bibliographical essay in: *Empire*, London 2000, 464-70. But see Marc Mancall tracing the influence of imperial institutions on a clash of cultures and their subsequent arrangement: *Russia and China. Their Diplomatic Relations to 1728*, Cambridge/Mass. 1971

[3] Miller, G.F., *Opisanie Sibirskogo tsarstva i vsekh proisshedshikh v nem del ot nachala, a osoblivo ot pokoreniia ego Rossiiskogo derzhavoi po sii vremena*, Sankt Petersburg 1750, pt. 1; idem, *Sibirskaia istoriia*, in: *Ezhemesiachnye sochineniia, k pol'ze i uveseleniiu sluzhashchie*, Sankt Petersburg 1763, vol. 18-19; idem, *Istoriia Sibiri*, Moscow 1999, vol.1, 249-50, 273-7 and passim

colourless in private expressions, typical only in their uniformity and permanence of mass and summary phenomenons", that is, "the elementary social-economic factors, when we find at the first level material and economic questions...".[4] Insofar as the relations between town and tsar are representative for imperial relations in Siberia, a very influential position was that of Novombergskii, drawing on the theory of the Russian service town authored by Vernadskii. Accordingly, the material and cultural growth of the town in Western Europe occurred naturally and slowly within a self-contained sphere of guilds, while the Muscovite state artificially interfered with this growth. Concerning the Siberian towns, Novombergskii maintained, "the artificiality of their occurrence is even more obvious" – "Organising town life beyond the Urals, the Moscow government brought in ready-made historical forms and there was no inclination to repeat this [aforementioned] long process..."[5] Thereby, they accepted the powerful image of Russia propagated by enlightenment political theorists in Europe, drawing on the body of earlier travelogues. Travelling authors in the sixteenth to seventeenth century had readily taken over representations of power and omnipotence portrayed in court ritual designed by clerics anxious to increase the tsar's standing in the Orthodox world. The travellers had interpreted thesm in the categorical terms of classical learning, among them Aristotele's concept of tyranny: "The Tsar...alone rules the whole country...he treats [his people] as the master of the house does his servants."[6] The rhetoric devices of Western theories of absolutism employed under Peter I and the consecutive, vigorous cult of Peter ensured that this theme of all-powerful autocracy and subservient society persisted through the eighteenth century. In the nineteenth century, Western and Russian views of

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[4] Golovachev, P.M., *Tiumen' v XVII stoletii*, Moscow 1903, 5. However, see also his and other Siberian historians' insistence on the role of towns in Siberian history: Pokrovskii, N.N., "Introduction", in: idem (ed.), *Pervoe stoletie sibirskikh gorodov*, Novosibirsk 1996, 13-8

[5] Novombergskii, N.Ia., *V poiskakh za materialami po istorii Sibiri*, Sankt Petersburg 1906, 20-1; Vernadskii, G.V., "O dvizhenii russkikh na vostok", in: *Nauchnyi isttoricheskii zhurnal* vol.1, vyp. 2 (1913), Sankt Petersburg 1914 no. 2, 52-61; idem, "Gosudarevy sluzhilye i promyshlennye liudi v vostochnoi Sibiri XVII veka", in: *ZhMNP* (1915) pt. LVI, 332-54. This concept has had grave repercussions in Western historiography of Russia: see Pipes, Richard, *Russia under the Old Regime*, [German version] München 1977, 102-3; Lantzeff, G., *Siberia in the Seventeenth Century*, Berkeley 1943

[6] Phrase by Adam Olearius, *The Travels of Olearius in Seventeenth-century Russia*, transl. and ed. by Samuel Baron, Stanford/CA 1967, 173; Poe, Marshall, *'Russian Despotism': The Origins and Dissemination of an Early Modern Commonplace*, Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, 1993

Muscovy reinforced each other, and Western perceptions of Russia as exotic[7] contributed to the dominance of the patrimonial vision in debates about the past. The state historical school gave primacy to the state and dismissed society as inert (S.M. Solov'ev, Boris Chicherin).[8] The Soviet view of the tsar and the economic and political institutions as guarding the interests of the ruling feudal class further contributed to the canonisation of the coercion paradigm. Instead of asking how such a vast empire as Russia could be governed at all, Western and exile historians from the revolution until the 1970s readily succumbed to the myth of all-embracing, unrestrained tsarist power, overly stressing military and administrative centralisation, although this version emphasised political coercion over social and economical forces.[9] In his recent book on the eighteenth-century palace revolutions, Kurukin notes a similar development of historiography in another field of power relations that was severely censored and thereafter largely neglected.[10]

Until very recently, this emphasis on the central perspective and, well into the nineteenth century severe censoring in a sensitive field of governance has discouraged studies of the multi-ethnic empire. The main reason for the failure before Kappeler's recent celebrated study to produce anything remotely similar was the narrowing of the perspective to questions of the nation-state that occurred precisely at the time when modern historiography developed; thus the great Russian historians of the nineteenth century, Solov'ev, Kliuchevskii and Platonov conducted national history, as did the historians of other countries. The history of the Russian empire thus became Russian history.[11] As already mentioned, regionalism can be added as another reason for the failure to analyse imperial relations, since in Siberia these historians struggled to find an independent point of view, yet given the powerful tropes of Russian despotism in the narratives of emancipation, they only arrived at views that stressed the role of the state and exploitation of the Siberian

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[7] Wolff, Larry, *Inventing Eastern Europe. The Map of Civilization on the Mind of the Enlightenment*, Stanford 1994

[8] Kollmann, Nancy, *By Honor Bound*, Ithaca/NY 1999 175

[9] For an overview of this literature, see ibid., 176 footnotes 22-3.

[10] See my review: "Rezension von: Kurukin, I.V.: Epocha "dworskich bur"". Otscherki polititscheskoi istorii poslepetrowskoi Rossii, 1725-1762 gg.. Rjazan 2003", in: *H-Soz-u-Kult*, 11.11.2004, >http://hsozkult.geschichte.hu-berlin.de/rezensionen/2004-4-104<.

[11] Kappeler, Andreas, *Rußland als Vielvölkerreich*, Munich 1992, 14-5. Though not contradicting his general argument, he still overlooks the eighteenth-century historians of Siberia: see the articles by Bakhrushin and Andreev in: Müller, *Istoriia* (1999), 17-149.

territories. As will be pointed out below, for ideological reasons the Siberian cossacks were rarely studied despite their dominant role in the early conquest and settlement, until in the late Soviet period, a number of Siberian historians embarked on this line of research.[12] These longstanding trends contributed to the lack of research in the field of institutional culture of the Russian empire.

In her recent chapter on "Strategies of Integration in an Autocracy", Kollmann has given a useful outline of coercive and consensus-based approaches to the issue of social cohesion in Muscovy, but does not fully discuss empire, especially not concerning those parts not exclusively characterised by their different ethnic composition.[13] In this sense, the term "autocrat", as already mentioned designed by clerics to impress the Orthodox world, still overshadows the aspect of empire.[14] However, the frequent source term "Sibirskoe tsarstvo" standing apart from "Moskovskaia Rus'" in the tsar's title indicates empire as closely as possible in Old Russian.[15] Russia was also an empire in the sense of disparate parts under a unified authority by virtue of the tax border between Siberia and Muscovy in the Urals. [16]

Concerning the multi-ethnic empire, Kappeler has demonstrated that it was not ruled exclusively by force and a bureaucratic hierarchy, but often by sharing power with the native elites. Below the level of ethnic elites, custom and law remained untouched, and the local nobles ruled their people and tribes on their own account, as long as no rebellions occurred and Moscow regularly received taxes.[17] This study poses similar questions, but applies them to a different part of the empire and a different social group – the Siberian cossacks – within it. The main question is whether in the Muscovite empire, populations generally had access to the tsar and the chancelleries only via intermediaries from among the nobles, and could therefore influence political decisions only through this channel – if at all. The Siberian

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[12] See 51. On spelling of the term "cossack", see 59

[13] She mentions the aspect of multi-national empire: Kollmann, *Honor*, 202

[14] Hans-Heinrich Torke's *Lexikon der Geschichte Rußlands*, Munich 1985, has no entry on empire or *Reich*, although there is "*Reichsversammlungen*". Cf. Lieven's brisk statement in his "Russia as Empire", in: Hosking, Geoffrey (ed.), *Reinterpreting Russia*, London 1999, 20 n.5: "On empire in pre-1917 Russia, nothing in English remotely matches Andreas Kappeler's *Rußland als Vielvölkerreich*, München 1992".

[15] For examples in petitions, see Pokrovskii, N.N., *Tomsk*, Novosibirsk 1989, 98; *PSRL* vol.36,1 p.40 l.110; RGADA f.1121 op. 1 no. 377, l.26.

[16] Lantzeff, *Siberia*, 122-3

[17] Kappeler, *Vielvölkerreich*, 33

cossacks are a particularly useful social group for the purposes of this investigation. Unlike the ethno-political cases Kappeler studied, these were largely – though not exclusively – Russians, and they never became co-opted into the court nobility in the same way as many native elites. At the same time, however, the Siberian cossacks regularly travelled to Moscow and were received at the chancellery and sometimes by the tsar. Analogous to Kappeler's questions, this study asks how the custom and laws of the Siberian cossacks could be made compatible with the institutional culture of the Muscovite empire. Unlike Kappeler's cases, however, the cossacks, who were mostly of Russian origin, therefore had grown up with the institutional culture of the empire ingrained within them. Thus, unlike the native elites, they were not learning about something entirely foreign. This is an interesting point, especially because of the reputation of cossacks as being rebels: the reason they fled to the frontiers, it is widely supposed, is because they wished to escape the restrictions of the Muscovite system. The cossacks are renown for their 'free spirit'.[18] Yet this thesis shows that these 'rebels' possessed an intimate knowledge of how to manipulate the institutional culture of the empire to their own advantage. Also unlike Kappeler's native elites, the Siberian cossacks maintained direct contacts with the court and chancelleries and were relatively frequently received in Moscow – to cite just one of the most important occasions, a delegation from each town or fortress accompanied the vital fur tax every year. The cossacks in part adhered to procedures established by the tsar to be awarded the opportunity to go to Moscow, where they also traded privately, but they also breached these procedures, quite often to the point of openly disobeying and even deposing the tsar's representative and their official commander, the voevoda. Cossacks are famed for their love of freedom and a "democratic" decision-making process, but historians have failed to put this observation into an analytical framework. Thus, important questions are not addressed: how could "democratic" institutions fit into the framework of autocracy, especially in Siberia, where historians suspect more rigid military command structures? How could a "free" spirit

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[18] Avrich, Paul, *Russian Rebels 1600-1800*, New York 1972; Nikitin, N.I., "O traditsiiakh kazach'ego i obshchinnogo samoupravleniia v Rossii XVII v.", *Izvestiia SORAN. Istoriia* 1992 (3), 3-8; idem, "O proizkhozhdenii, strukture i sotsial'noi prirode soobshchestv russkikh kazakov", *Istoriia SSSR* (1986), no.4, 167-177; Hosking, Geoffrey, *Russia and the Russians*, London 2001, 115; Skorik, A. P., *Kazachii Don*, Rostov-on-Don 1995, vol.I, 140-4

co-exist with service to the tsar, and at the same time reconcile its aspirations to accepting the leadership of the tsar's voevodas – nobles and landowners from the central areas of Muscovy? This study investigates what happened when empire, beyond the reach of its most effective coercive means of integration encountered a group of people that had grown up with its institutions and were able to work the institutional culture to their own advantage.

In fact, an openly rebellious attitude of the delegates from Siberia constituted a serious problem for the court. In some of the century's major risings in the capital, Siberian delegates did take part, for example in 1648, when the tsar had to sacrifice his highest dignitaries to the rebels.[19] In most cases, however, the Siberian rebels found it more rewarding to keep within the boundaries of established institutions and nevertheless to press home their agenda, which included important elements of their specific cossack customs. This ambivalence of institutional permanence and institutional change therefore constitutes one of the important areas of investigation throughout this thesis.

Institutional analysis applied in history has received considerable attention recently, especially at the Dresden project of the *Deutsche Forschungsgesellschaft*, "Institutionality and History", largely triggered by the transformations in Eastern Europe and elsewhere. While there is a common notion of institutions as *per se* stable and enduring[20], the Dresden project has investigated the ways in which institutions become permanent, and the mechanisms of their transformation. Institutionality is characterised, paradoxically, by both permanence and change, since the quest for social stability is basic for its analysis.[21]

Responding to the need for reliability and social order, institutions are established, although they, as any means for this purpose, are more likely to break

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[19] Pokrovskii, N.N., *Tomsk 1648-1649 gg.*, Novosibirsk 1989, 299-302

[20] This notion harks back to Arnold Gehlen, who has introduced the term "institution", calling them "stabilised tensions": see Rehberg, Karl-Siegbert, "Weltrepräsentanz und Verkörperung. Institutionelle Analyse und Symboltheorien. Eine Einführung in systematischer Absicht", in: Melville, Gert (ed.), *Institutionalität und Symbolisierung. Verstetigung kultureller Ordnungsmuster in Vergangenheit und Gegenwart*, Köln 2001, 3-49, esp. 9-17, citation 13.

[21] Rau, Susanne; Gerd Schwerhoff, "Öffentliche Räume in der Frühen Neuzeit. Überlegungen zu Leitbegriffen und Themen eines Forschungsfeldes", in: iidem (eds.), *Zwischen Gotteshaus und Taverne. Öffentliche Räume in Spätmittelalter und Früher Neuzeit*, Köln 2004, 11-52, here: 24-5. Ludwig Steindorff avoids the term institution, but his description meets all standard characteristics of institutionality: *Memoria in Altrußland*, Stuttgart 1994, esp.245. On monastic institutionalisations: Melville, Gert (ed.), *Institutionen und Geschichte*, Köln 1992, 137-156, 259-437.

down than to remain stable. Therefore, the main effort in maintaining institutions is to adhere to and to fuel the illusion of institutional stability and permanence. However, since empire is dynamic – and changed quickly in Russia due to the early modern Military Revolution and, especially in Siberia, territorial expansion – institutions had to answer to this change. In the literature on the Russian empire, however, institutional change has so far not been high on the agenda.[22] In fact, as institutions are part of the cultural and social processes that result in change, institutional change is part of the rise and fall of empires, which have been investigated so far only with the approaches of diplomatic and power politics, ritual and symbols of the imperial court, and in an ethnopolitical perspective. To uphold the vital illusion of permanence and stability, institutionality has to accommodate change. Siberian cossacks, like other agents – chancelleries, boyars, nobles, voevodas, clerics, and the tsar – answered to these ambivalences in their petitions and found ways to harness the empire's institutions to their specific needs. As is well known from the experience of others, for example large parts of the peasantry that lost their right to petition the tsar during the century and succumbed to serfdom, by no means all groups in the Muscovite empire succeeded in influencing institutions significantly according to their needs.[23] Therefore, institutional analysis also considers the category of power. Whoever can influence the way in which people perceive institutions wields important powers, since others have to rely on them and therefore to adapt themselves to the established definition. In chapter I, therefore, it will be investigated how Siberian cossacks organised and how they managed to establish a position of power that allowed to influence the tsar's and the Siberian chancellery's decisions, and the institutional culture of the empire. Chapter II discusses the material underpinning of this position – to what effect did Siberian cossacks communicate and negotiate with the tsar, and how did they maintain themselves? An implicit concern of these chapters is also the contribution the Siberian cossacks made that led other agents of empire to adapt partially to their demands. Chapter III then investigates the symbolic forms of communication in imperial Siberia, the institutions, their interpretations, and change, in the context of

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[22] Lieven, *Empire*, 24-5; Eisenstadt, Samuel, *The Political Systems of Empires*, New York 1963
[23] Boškovska, Nada, "'Dort werden wir selber Bojaren sein'", *JBGO* vol.37 (1989), 345-86

power relations established in the preceding chapters.[24] Chapter IV explores the ways in which institutions and their interpretations structured administration, and the degree to which it can be called a bureaucracy. With regard to the latter issue, one of the concerns of chapter III, whether, and to what degree communication, negotiations, and the established position of power of Siberian cossacks resulted in a public sphere, will loom large for the question of the extent of accountability and efficiency achieved in administration.

One of the major problems in Siberian history remains the question of how the tsar managed to squeeze at least ten percent of the state's budget[25] out of this wild, remote, almost uninhabited and by all contemporary standards inaccessible territory bereft of virtually all infrastructure except a few wooden fortresses dotted around its vast expanses. The dilemma is no easier to resolve if we consider that even states much better suited to the demands made by the early modern military revolution on their budgets had to rely on the structures they already found in society.[26] Even Peter I., however, was surprised that not even the structures usually expected in a Muscovite town, such as the office of elder, existed in Siberia.[27] Trying to explain how Muscovy managed its wealthy but unwieldy Siberian territories, Lantzeff, in his acclaimed study of Siberian administration, and Dmytryshyn have relied on the supposed control the centralising bureaucracy exerted over Siberia.[28] However, this clear-cut image of control from above collides with the reality of frequent protest against misappropriation of funds by the tsar's representatives in Siberia, and in general with the well-established insight that bureaucracies work just as well as the degree of public scrutiny to which they are subjected. This was all the more the case since one of the generally accepted reasons for the relatively even functioning of the adminstration, the considerable level of professionalisation of the nobles who operated it, according to Lantzeff, did not apply in distant Siberia, where governors,

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[24] Although part of this subject is discussed in ch.I with the intermediary relations between the voevoda and the cossacks: see 77-87

[25] See 36.

[26] Frost, R.I., "Review Article: Early Modern State-Building, the Scandinavian *Machtstaat*, and the Shortcomings of Anglo-Saxon Scholarship", in: *JEMH* 7,1-2 (2003), 164-71, 168

[27] Akishin, M.O., *Politseiskoe gosudarstvo i sibirskoe obshchestvo*, Novosibirsk 1996, 6-7

[28] Lantzeff, *Siberia*, 201, 205; Dmytryshyn, "Administrative", 18-21, 34-5

as is often stressed, enriched themselves beyond all controls.[29] Protest against the enrichment of voevodas, therefore, seems to be one of the most likely candidates for an explanation of how Muscovy extracted the riches of the Siberian furs. Historical studies, however, have not established a framework for the forms of organisation that fuelled these protests that stands up to comparative scrutiny. Therefore, one of the aims of this thesis is to establish the forms of organisation of Siberian cossacks (see chapter I) and to explore the ways by which they made themselves heard. This thesis seeks to apply the results of the prolonged discussions of Habermas' theory of the bourgeois public, which has recently been reexamined by historians more interested in the early modern genesis of the public sphere than in pure ideal types, to a small, but very important section of the Muscovite population – the Siberian town cossacks and their public behaviour.[30] Clearly, the Siberian public does not fit readily into Habermas's theoretical structure. While Habermas holds staunchly to his confrontation of the bourgeois public sphere with the "representational public" of the princely court, which "did not represent the population but represented its own power to the population"[31], these historians have pointed out that the bourgeois public was rooted in early forms of public spheres that can best be understood as partitioned, based on face-to-face relations and primarily frequented by particular categories of the population, though generally open to other groups; these early forms of public spheres could even be thematically limited, unlike the general public of modern mass media.[32] At a different level, this is also a reaction to recent criticism by historians of modern Russia of a relatively new and fledgling field in early modern Russian history, the history of Muscovy from the perspective of its regions. Hausmann and Kappeler conclude that studies of the regional history of Muscovy lack a coherent theoretical framework, or tend to downplay it, especially if compared with medieval and early modern history in more western parts of the continent.[33] Applying the

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[29] Lantzeff, *Siberia*, 203-4; "Satraps": Pipes, *Rußland*, 126. According to Hartmut Rüß, the leeway of voevodas may have increased with the distance from the centre: *Herren und Diener*, Köln 1994, 317

[30] Rau, "Öffentliche Räume", 16-7

[31] Habermas, Jürgen, "Concluding Remarks", in: Calhoun, Craig (ed.), *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, Cambridge/Mass. 1992, 462-468, here: 464-5; Habermas, Jürgen, *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit*, Frankfurt/Main 1990, 58-61, citation 61

[32] An overview of the literature is provided by Rau, "Öffentliche Räume", 11-20, 27-52

[33] Hausmann, Guido, "Review: Die Geschichte des Moskauer Rußland aus der Perspektive seiner Regionen. Internationale Konferenz in Wien, 19.-21. Juni 2003", *JBGO* vol. 52,1 (2004), pp. 132-44,

conceptual framework of a partitioned and thematically limited public sphere to Muscovy is an approach that has not been explored. So far, it has only been established that the provincial gentry of the central areas and the higher nobility had a say in government decisions, although their influence was limited to non-public spheres or to the interstices of autocracy; but all those below these social ranks are still considered as excluded from political influence.[34] Yet in trying to conceptualise the relationship of autocracy and the rebellious Siberian cossacks it rapidly became clear that there is simply too much evidence to overlook the limited localised public spheres they established.

Since public spheres, imperial institutions and local organisations are all intricately interconnected and only make sense in their mutual context, it is sensible to study and present them in their environment as completely as the sources allow. A narrow local focus is recommendable to manage the diverse and plentiful sources such an approach involves, and also since in this subject in particular, a micro-study is best suited to produce the kind of data, and references between the elements of institutional culture needed. The last chapter will make use of a suitable body of sources concerning the Selenga rebellion 1696-7.

Siberia in the Seventeenth Century – Historiography and Background

The forms of organisation and the institutions that structured the complex relationship between Moscow and the cossacks are related to the turns and twists of the history of the conquest of Siberia, showing that Moscow could not assert its power without compromising. In 1581/1582 Ermak and his cossacks conquered the khanate of Sibir' in what is now called Western Siberia. After their eventual defeat, Moscow's armies took over, and the first Russian fortresses were founded during the late 1580s and 1590s on the territory of the former khanate. In 1604 Tomsk was

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esp. 143-4; Kappeler, Andreas, "Einleitung", in: idem (ed.), *Die Geschichte Rußlands im 16. und 17. Jahrhundert aus der Perspektive seiner Regionen*, Wiesbaden 2004, 8-14, here: 10

[34] Almost a decade ago, Kivelson came to a negative appraisal of the possibility of a (Habermasian) public sphere in her pathbreaking study of the political culture of Vladimir and Suzdal' provincial gentry, although she recognised a developing civil society and a public sphere "without the identifiable benchmarks of opposition offered by a free press, literate culture, or institutional autonomy", in which, nevertheless, "premodern people could function apart from autocratic regulation": *Autocracy*, 6-7.

founded as an important springboard to the east on the brink of the open steppe shielding east-west trade; already in 1608 the Tomsk cossacks rebelled for the first time.[35] There were further rebellions in 1628, in 1633-4; in 1636-8; in 1642 the growing town was embroiled in a rebellion during Tukhachevskii's campaign, and in 1648-50 it was governed by rebellious cossacks and their elected voevoda. This does not mean that the intervening periods were calm. An inventory drawn up by an enemy of the Tomsk rebels, voevoda Osip Shcherbatyi, based on parts of the lost archives of the Siberian chancellery, claimed as many as nine rebellions up to 1647.[36] Such protests and concomitant periods of temporary self-rule were widespread, but locally limited. Nevertheless they concerned almost all Siberian towns at different times. Moreover, the Time of Troubles (1598-1613) meant a serious shrinkage of Moscow's rule beyond the Urals. Despite such impediments to the tsar's control, already in 1639 cossack bands had reached the Pacific seaboard. Russian penetration into Siberia took two paths – in the north a combination of navigation in small ships along the White Sea shore and river transport attracted merchants and trappers from Northern Russian towns. The late sixteenth-century predominance of merchants in this area ended in 1601, when voevodas and cossacks sent by the tsar set up the town of Mangazeia on the river Taz as a trading centre and for the collection of the fur tribute, the *iasak*. Other outposts were set up in Turukhansk in 1604 and Khantaisk in 1620 on the banks of the lower Enisei. In the south, there was another network of rivers along the Irtysh, Ob, Ket, Enisei and Angara, which led as far as Iakutsk (founded 1632) on the river Lena and the Pacific ocean by various waterways. On the portage between the Ket and a tributary to the Enisei, the Makovskyi *ostrog* was founded in 1618, and Eniseisk followed in 1619 north of the confluence of the Enisei and Angara rivers. To the south, movement was far slower, and restricted to some mountainous pockets in the Altai, where Kuznetsk was established in 1618 south of Tomsk, and to Krasnoiarsk (1628), which remained an important, but embattled outpost in the steppe throughout the century. In the partly wooded lands on the rim of the open steppe Russians encountered protracted nomad resistance, which they could

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[35] Koretskii, V.I., "Iz istorii zaseleniia Sibiri nakanune i vo vremia 'smuty'", in: *Russkoe naselenie Pomor'ia i Sibiri*, Moscow 1973, 37-59, here: 53-5

[36] Pokrovskii, *Tomsk*, 356-7; Aleksandrov, *Vlast'*, 240-1, 246-8

not overcome until late Petrine times. During the 1640s the Buryats around lake Baikal were subdued by cossacks from Iakutsk and Eniseisk; but the emigration of the local Buryats meant that Irkutsk was founded only in 1661.[37] During a phase of internal Chinese unrest cossacks established an independent territory on the Amur, which, however, was forced to seek Muscovite support when the Manchus fought back to regain what they considered their dominion. The ensuing war lasted until the peace of Nerchinsk in 1689.

By the early 1650s, Muscovy had, in little over half a century, extended nominal control over the enormous territory between the Urals and the Pacific, albeit not yet all of what today is called Siberia. The conquest thus was rapid, considering that today's Siberia comprises about one twelfth of the earth's landmass.[38] Considering that tsarist power also suffered serious setbacks, this rapidity raises an important question. While it will not be disputed that military technology and the network of waterways contributed to this success[39], an explanation is lacking as to how the shortage of vigorous structures of private capital in Muscovy, which should have impeded this quick expansion, was overcome. This thesis asks how in a cash-starved country Muscovites managed to overcome distance in economic terms and how this huge territory was integrated politically and institutionally. (Chapter II)

Throughout the seventeenth century, Siberia was not a territory that Moscow could govern chiefly by military means – more than anywhere, its power relied on cossacks in small, isolated garrisons while there was no regular or noble army to discipline them. Except for the few voevodas sent as administrators and military leaders to Siberian towns for two to four years, there was no nobility in Siberia. The sheer distance that separated Siberia from Moscow has often been used to explain this fact, yet distance by itself is not a sufficient reason. Causes for this different social structure can be found in the frontier conditions of Siberian settlements and in the trade with furs. Siberia was essential for Moscow for its unrivalled supply of furs to an increasingly affluent Europe that desired them as the prestigious adornment of representative garments. Furs, in particular the sumptuous black sable, could buy the

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[37] Kopylov, A.N., "O date osnovaniia Irkutska", *Istoriia SSSR* no. 5, 1960, 165-6
[38] See Map of Siberia with dates of foundation.
[39] Dmytryshyn, "Administrative", 24

foreign weapons and military expertise the tsars needed to triumph in Muscovy's wars in the south and west.[40] How conditions in Siberia differed from European Muscovy, and how and why Muscovite institutions were adapted to meet its needs is a major concern of this study.

The renewed interest of historians in Siberia following *Perestroika* and the break-up of the Soviet Union concentrated overwhelmingly on the natives. Forsyth's challenge to Soviet interpretations of a close partnership of Russian and native lower classes has demonstrated the contribution of brute force to the Siberian balance of power, devastating the natives in particular during the first phase of conquest.[41] In turn this challenge elicited a new concern with the natives' own role in the economic conquest of a sub-continent which was ravaging the fur resources. These studies have also highlighted the fact that during the seventeenth century Russian power was largely restricted to the grid of rivers – with the exception of the more populated western Siberian areas immediately surrounding Tobol'sk, which had settled or semi-nomadic native populations. Collectors of the traditional fur tax had to rely on native notions of taxes, which had developed under the Mongols. It was impossible regularly to tax nomadic hunters in the endless forests bare of any infrastructure without attracting them by some means. This meant that a strong element of barter had to be added to the vague promise of security made by the cossacks. While this exchange was unequal in terms of an ideal market, introducing a strong extra-economic-element, the widespread claims that cossacks deceived native hunters are partly misleading: The assumption that natives could not judge the value of goods offered betrays a degree of arrogance and ignorance of fundamental economic laws. Prices relate to the relative scarcity of goods in different locations and to the distances wares have to travel to reach markets.[42] Kotoshikhin, the fugitive clerk of the Ambassadorial chancellery already knew that the depletion of furs in Western Siberia and the need to turn further east had increased prices.[43] The organisational

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[40] Fisher, R., *The Russian Fur Trade*, Berkeley 1943

[41] Forsyth, James, *A History of the Peoples of Siberia*, Cambridge 1992, 41, passim

[42] Slezkine, Yuri, *Arctic Mirrors*, Ithaca 1994; Collins, David, "Subjugation and Settlement in Seventeenth and Eighteenth Century Siberia", in: Wood, *History*, 37-54; Schorkowitz, Dittmar, *Die soziale und politische Organisation bei den Kalmücken*, Frankfurt/Main 1992; Khodarkovsky, Michael, *Where Two Worlds Met*, Ithaca 1992; idem, *Russia's Steppe Frontier*, Bloomington 2002

[43] Kotošixin, Grigorij, *O Rossii v carstvovanie Alekseja Mixajloviča*, Oxford 1980, 107 fol.137^{v} *sod*

and institutionalised efforts to overcome the enormous distances involved in the fur trade are one of the subjects of this thesis. Some of the frequent, but locally limited native rebellions in the Taiga and Tundra served to renegotiate the terms of trade. Fear also reigned over the small and isolated teams of *iasak* collectors in the endless forests. There, cossacks were more than officials – they acted as agents of the tsar's enterprise in the fur trade and simultaneously on their own account.

Outside Russia, this new interest in Siberian natives is not matched by any significant contribution to the study of their foes and partners: the cossacks who were the main agents of the tsar's power in Siberia. Lantzeff's 1943 account of seventeenth-century Siberian government treated them very briefly. He considered the "*esprit de corps*" of the cossack organisation as exclusively inspired by the cossack oath, the hardships of their service and their mutual responsibility to the tsar. However, he did not explain why, despite the substantial profits that could be made in Siberia, nobles either did not settle there – or turned into cossacks.[44] Longworth traces cossacks in all their diverse regional and temporal settings, refuting nationalist myths. He claims two different styles of living, the Muscovite, originating in and dictated by the forest, and the Cossack, a "child of the open steppe." Despite being ethnically Russian, for Longworth, the cossacks were naturally opposed to anything Muscovite, unless they allied against still more formidable enemies, the Tatars. Idealising, he describes them as:

> "Born of disorder and reared in the dangerous borderlands between the Russians of the northern forests and the destructive Tatars of the southern steppes, [they] had the self-reliant man's contempt for security."

This romantic, individualist image of the cossacks – besides denying the nomads their right of pasture – collides with Siberian reality. Struggling to explain how freedom-loving men like Ermak's cossacks could become the "unwitting tentacle of the Russian empire", Longworth, due to the one-sided treatment of cossack organisation and institutions common in Western accounts, distorts the source material and suggests that Ermak's cossacks were unusually submissive to their

[44] Lantzeff, *Siberia*, 76. See also Dmytryshyn, "Administrative", 17-36

leader from early on in the campaign.[45] As chapter I will show, there is nothing particular in the chronicle accounts of Ermak's expedition, at least from a cossack point of view. Rather, this account, which was soon promulgated throughout Russia, stresses the same mechanisms that functioned among the so-called "free" cossacks of the western steppe rim. This thesis shows that the organising principles of the cossacks' organisation were related to the specific conditions of the frontier. It was further adapted to particular Siberian conditions, in particular since the cossack way of life engulfed all the tsar's Siberian servitors. Cossacks, musketeers (*strel'tsy*) and even the nominally higher-ranking *deti boiarskie* were known as "cossacks" and used this term about themselves.[46] They also called themselves "servitors" (*sluzhilye liudi*) or even "serving cossacks" (*sluzhilye kazaki*), but there was no general rule as to the specific context in which this occurred – all sources are more or less related to service, and the few surviving private letters do not allow any firm distinction of the contexts in which these terms were used. Therefore, throughout this study, the cossacks will be spelled with a small letter, deviating from the convention that, except for the "Cossacks", writes ethnonyms with a capital letter.

Depending on Siberian supplies and trade, and at the same time weakly represented in Siberia, Moscow fostered cossack forms of organisation for its own needs. At the same time, it found itself impelled to tolerate the manifestations of local autonomy that these forms of organisation stimulated. The study of these issues can also help dispel the myths about the relationship of Russians and Siberian natives still extant in Russian accounts of Siberian cossacks. Nevertheless, Pokrovskii's and Aleksandrov's studies of local rebellions and the role of the "*mir*" in local administration have their particular strengths where they prove that cossacks were not at the mercy of Moscow's administrators in the Siberian towns, the voevodas.

At least in the texts of instructions issued in Moscow to each voevoda, he wielded impressive powers. Voevodas were originally field commanders of the noble levy,

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[45] Longworth, Philip, *The Cossacks*, London 1969, 53, 67, 75. Cf. Bakhrushin, S.V., "Vopros o prisoedinenii Sibiri v istoricheskoi literature", in: idem, *Nauchnye trudy*, Moscow 1955, vol.III pt.I, 17ff. See 35-66.

[46] Forsyth, *Peoples*, 34; Vasil'ev, A.P., *Zabaikal'skie kazaki,* vols. I-III, Chita 1918, vol.I prilozh., 25; Ogloblin, N.N., *Obozrenie stolbtsov i knig Sibirskago prikaza*, 4 pts., Moscow 1895-1900 pt. III, 101. In 1701 Siberian musketeers were enrolled formally as cossacks: Akishin, *Politseiskoe*, 13. Cf. Longworth, *Cossacks*, 67.

but they had first superseded civil administration by the *namestnik* late in the sixteenth century in frontier areas, where military leadership was essential; during the Time of Troubles they also became more common in towns removed from the frontier. In larger towns, the voevoda was required to decide harmoniously – *za odno*, i.e. conjointly, *bezvolokitno* i.e. without mutual hindrance, and *bezo vsiakia rozni* i.e. without squabbles – with his associates, a second voevoda, a *d'iak* or a *pod'iachii s pripis'iu*, who were usually appointed and given instructions together.[47] In Siberia, this system, with roots in Byzantine ideas about power-sharing as well as in Mongol double-circuit administration,[48] was conducive to conflicts among the voevodas and afforded to cossacks opportunities to interfer with administration.[49] The voevoda commanded the cossacks and headed local administration in the voevoda's office, consisting mainly of under-secretaries (*pod'iachii*) handling the records, and the sworn officials for tax and grain stocks. The voevoda held the supreme court of law on the local level and decided over recruitment of rank-and-file, service assignments, allotments of salary and the right to travel. His powers were, according to the instruction, restricted by divine advice, by the requirement not to offend the local population, by the associates' mutual agreement, and by the tsar's decree, although the exact delimitation of the voevoda's authority and the questions to be referred to the chancellery and the tsar was not defined.[50] Beyond theory, however, the voevoda was accompagnied by a few kin and servants, if, especially in the smaller outlying towns, by anyone at all, and therefore was in the minority if opposed by the cossacks. As Aleksandrov and Pokrovskii have proven, this happened quite often, and rebellions frequently had the desired effect of overruling the voevoda's decisions. However, they have relied on Western European models of the "estate-representative monarchy" and of absolutism to explain the cossacks'

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[47] Lantzeff, *Siberia*, 57

[48] However, Mongol double-circuit administration and the original Muscovite adoption in the early fourteenth century, the *namestniki* and the *volosteli*, was divided into military and civil responsibilities, although they also overlapped. The voevodas replaced the military leader, the *volosteli*: Ostrowski, *Mongols*, 45. In the late sixteenth century, voevodas replaced namestniks thus acquiring civil powers.powers: Lantzeff, *Siberia*, 47-61. The idea of harmony (*symphonia*) applied to relations between the tsar and the metropolitan or patriarch as well as the bojars: Scheliha, Wolfram von, *Rußland und die orthodoxe Universalkirche in der Patrarchatsperiode 1589-1721*, Wiesbaden 2004; Bushkovitch, Paul, "The Formation of a National Consciousness in Early Modern Russia", in: Harvard Ukrainian Studies vol. 10 (1986), 355-376, 368; Rowland, "Limits?", 140ff.

[49] Aleksandrov, *Vlast'*, 187, 267

[50] Lantzeff, *Siberia*, 47-59. On voevodas, see also 78-82, 141-2, 225-6

tenacity,[51] which have been criticised for their reliance on legal arguments even where applied to France or England. Concerning Muscovy, evidence of a so-called "estate-representative monarchy" which preceded absolutism is particularly scant. The so-called "*zemskie sobory*" or assemblies of the land, Muscovy's main participatory bodies, with some minor exceptions, lacked all legal regularities, were convoked by the tsar and served to consent to tax bills rather than discuss them.[52] Recent studies of cossack communities west of the Urals have also failed to produce significant evidence for Boeck's assertion that cossack identity during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries hinged upon the juridical status marking their distinction from other subjects of a ruler.[53] Boeck claims there was no common cossack experience except for their extra deal with the ruler, accepting that cossack history disappears in a "story…told in terms of diversity."[54] Though it will not be disputed that cossacks adapted to their environment and were quite capable negotiators in remuneration and status issues, Boeck's explanation and the model of the estate-representative monarchy do not adequately explain why they had the necessary resources to do so, and the nature of these resources.

As bureaucracy grew throughout the seventeenth century, Aleksandrov and Pokrovskii claim, the tsar lost interest in the less controllable, but fully-fledged estates.[55] Yet as recent studies on western princely states have shown, even the most "absolute" monarchs had to rely on their estates to some degree, realising the importance of consultation and consent.[56] Thus the question needs to be addressed whether there were other reasons for the loss of political significance that cossack forms of organisation suffered in the eighteenth century.

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[51] Aleksandrov, V.A., Pokrovskii, N.N., *Vlast' i obshchestvo. Sibir' v XVII v.*, Novosibirsk 1991; Pokrovskii, *Tomsk*

[52] Nosov, N.E., *Stanovlenie soslovno-predstavitel'nykh uchrezhdenii v Rossii*, Leningrad 1969; Cherepnin, L.V., *Zemskie sobory Russkogo gosudarstva v XVI-XVII vv.*, Moscow 1978; Stökl, Günther, "Gab es im Moskauer Staat 'Stände'?", *JBGO* vol.11 (1963), 321-342; Rüß, *Herren*, 442-3

[53] Boeck, Brian, "Review of Mininkov, Plokhy, Sen'; O'Rourke", *Kritika* vol.4.3 (2003), 735-46, here: 738, 744; Plokhy, Serhii, *The Cossacks and Religion in Early Modern Ukraine*, Oxford, 110, 111. N.A. Mininkov introduces the concept of vassalage, but in the absence of written contracts or oaths, his argument is weak: *Donskoe kazachestvo v epokhu pozdnego srednevekov'ia*, Rostov-na-Donu 1998, 271-83.

[54] Bocck, "Review", 745

[55] Aleksandrov, *Vlast'*, 1-10, 15-6, 351-7

[56] Henshall, Nicholas, *The Myth of Absolutism*, London 1992; Duchhardt, Heinz, "Absolutismus – Abschied von einem Epochenbegriff?", *HZ* vol.258 no.1 (1994), 113-22; idem, *Das Zeitalter des Absolutismus*, Munich 1998, 37-9, 57-67

Russian historians increasingly doubt the interpretation of the Siberian records in terms of an estate of the cossacks. Akishin has unearthed Peter I's surprise when it became obvious during his reforms of urban administration that there were no *zemskie izby*, which elsewhere served as a precursor to the town hall, in Siberian towns. Drawing on these findings, Vershinin has demonstrated that cossack organisations lacked permanence and coherence to a degree that makes it dubious to consider them as estates. He has also re-evaluated Siberian voevodas' aspirations and service, hitherto only discussed as an aspect of increased state power. This has led him to conclude that voevodas were the only moving force in Siberia. He stresses that left to their own devices communities of Russian migrants would have established small, isolated, uncoordinated settlements, succumbing to the severe climatic conditions without externally organised mutual aid.[57]

While this might be the upshot in a highly speculative scenario, Vershinin does not explore the relationship of cossacks and the voevodas, or ask why Siberian cossacks were so useful to Moscow other than being inexpensive. Recent studies of the Terek and Don cossacks notice the usefulness of cossack groups to Moscow, yet explain it merely by the Muscovite state's weakness and the low maintenance sufficient for cossacks. The early modern military reforms are often measured in terms of increased discipline and regularisation. However, the "mercurial" – in terms of loyalty and discipline – Don cossacks were often more effective against Tatar forces and Ottoman forts than regular Muscovite armies.[58] This is not the only unnoticed contradiction in current accounts of cossacks. The assertion that cossack institutions were despotic and democratic at the same time is left unexplained. Democracy among cossacks is taken at face value, without further explanation as to how it worked, how far it was democratic and how this alleged democracy translated into – or at least coexisted with – military cost-effectiveness.[59] Thus there is a gap in

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[57] Akishin, *Politseiskoe*, 6-7. Vershinin, E.V., *Voevodskoe upravlenie v Sibiri*, Ekaterinburg 1998, 145-6

[58] Boeck, Brian, "Capitulation or Negotiation: Relations Between the Don Host and Moscow in the Aftermath of the Razin Uprising", paper read at the international conference "The History of Muscovite Russia from the Perspective of its Regions", Vienna 19th-21st June 2003, 17 and passim

[59] Barrett, Thomas, *At the Edge of Empire*, Oxford 1999; Boeck, "Review", 743; Hosking, *Russians*, 115; Skorik, *Don*, vol.I, 140-4; Sokol, Edward, *Cossacks*, in: Wieczynski, Joseph (ed.), *The Modern Encyclopedia of Russian and Soviet History*, Gulf Breeze/FL, vol.VIII, 60-61

our knowledge about how the cossack group functioned, and how it related to the voevoda, to the tsar and to the chancellery system.

Based on military sociology and anthropology of the steppe rim, this study shows how the cossacks developed flexible and inclusive forms of organisation. (Chapter I) Concentrating on the cossacks in Poland-Lithuania, Kumke has shown that a very specific form of primary group was responsible for the peculiar characteristics of the cossacks noticed but not explained satisfyingly in a welter of studies.[60] Such a group, which I will call after Kumke "*Personenverband*",[61] served the cossacks as a basis for the articulation of their interests.[62] These forms of organisation and the institutional links between the cossacks and Moscow offer a coherent explanation for the phenomena of the rapid establishment and consolidation of a Russian Siberia.

In a country renowned even by early modern standards for its weak market relations and paltry infrastructure, private entrepreneurs on their own were insufficient for the significant dynamism of the Russian expansion in Siberia. Pressing economic needs and political considerations contributed to setting up a surprisingly effective state enterprise. Monopolies bestowed on private merchant corporations by European colonial empires struggled with the same problems of local graft and petty trade undermining their privileges, as did Muscovy in Siberia.[63] Nevertheless, Siberian cossacks were not simply brigands, as they are often portrayed.[64] The Siberian chancellery did its best to motivate cossacks in the same way Hanseatic merchants did by offering their sailors a small parcel of stowage room ("*Führung*") during hauls.[65] Relying on the wording of petitions, and impelled under Soviet rule to present the cossack lower class in Siberia as disadvantaged and poor, scholars have overlooked this issue. Flexible handling of salaries by the Siberian chancellery and local voevoda offices made an important contribution to the quick expansion in Siberia. Individual cossacks and cossack groups had to apply each time

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[60] Above those already mentioned: Avrich, *Rebels*; Longworth, *Cossacks*; Stökl, Günther, *Die Entstehung des Kosakentums*, Munich 1952; Astapenko, Mikhail, *Istoriia kazachestva Rossii.* vol.1-2, Rostov-on-Don 1998, here: vol.1, 29-32

[61] There is no English word that quite captures the nuances of the German term: (military) 'unit' (*Verband*) stresses too much a unitary character while 'association' is too lose to carry the implications of a 'banding together of individuals'.

[62] Kumke, Carsten, *Führer und Geführte bei den Zaporoger Kosaken*, Wiesbaden 1993, 479-97

[63] Tracy, James (ed.), *The Political Economy of Merchant Empires*, Cambridge 1991

[64] Forsyth, *Peoples*, 33-4

[65] Heinsius, Paul, *Das Schiff der Hansischen Frühzeit*, Köln 1986, 240-2

and could negotiate the actual amount paid. They depended on flexible lines of credit allowing them to undertake journeys entailing huge costs and risks. (Chapter II)

Studies of Siberian government and bureaucracy agree that it was ineffective and corrupt.[66] While accepting that this might be the outcome if modern criteria are applied, this study re-evaluates the very conditions of effectiveness under which the Siberian bureaucracy functioned. Challenging conventional interpretations, this thesis shows that under early modern conditions and in a frontier environment enormously distant from the centre, the administration did surprisingly well. (Chapter IV) To a considerable degree, charges of corruption still await scrutiny. They are difficult to gauge, since sources are sparse or do not contain the right kind of information. Yet in several cases, close study of the sources shows that 'corruption' is often an inadequate or misleading label for allegations of over-charging on the part of the voevodas or other officials; in any case it was not a concept known to seventeenth-century Russians. These assessments concur with a number of recent reappraisals of early-modern Russian bureaucracy, which concede that in essential issues, such as defending the frontier or redeeming slaves, Muscovite chancelleries were more effective than in extractive fields.[67]

Muscovite chancelleries can best be described as a historical bureaucracy, in particular since, diverging from modern terms, they coupled a considerable degree of professionalism and adherence to their own norms they themselves formulated with a general acceptance that people were to be treated according to scaled social value. Where the voice of a boyar weighed more than that of a member of the petty gentry, cossacks and other lower class Muscovites needed mechanisms allowing them access to justice and the ability to defend their local interests. Yet individuals could find they were lost in such an environment – a chancellery's clerks only considered claims promising a handsome reward.[68] Even so, members of some non-noble groups

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[66] Lantzeff, *Siberia*, 205; Dmytryshyn, "Apparatus", 28; Aleksandrov, *Vlast'*, 135-140; Pokrovskii, *Tomsk*, 154; Leont'eva, G.A., *Sluzhilye liudi vostochnoi Sibiri vo vtoroi polovine XVII – pervoi chetverti XVIII vv.*, Moscow 1972, 77; idem, "Volneniia sluzhilykh liudei v Vostochnoi Sibiri", in: *Russkoe naselenie Pomor'ia*, 94-105; Nikitin, N.I., *Sluzhilye liudi v Zapadnoi Sibiri XVII v.*, Novosibirsk 1988, 94. But see, for Muscovy in general, Rüß, *Herren*, 309-26

[67] Brown, Peter, "Neither Fish nor Fowl: Administrative Legality Seventeenth-Century Russia", *JBGO* 50.1 (2002), 1-21, here 15, 20; Davies, Brian, *The Role of the Town Governors in the Defense and Military Colonization of Muscovy's Southern Frontier*, Chicago 1983, vols. 1-2; Sedov, P.V., "Podnosheniia v Moskovskikh prikazakh XVII veka", *OI* (1996), 139-152

[68] Goehrke, Carsten, *Russischer Alltag*, Zürich 2003, vol.1, 273-4

could expect the defence of their interests in the chancellery system against infringements of their rights due to over-riding concerns such as taxation or military demands.[69] The cossack group therefore was essential to provide the necessary backing for soliciting cossack interests in Moscow or with the voevodas.

Since cossack groups were not permanent organisations, but negotiations demanded a high degree of permanence and organisation, a crucial question arises: How could they sustain an institutional order that allowed for regular negotiations about salary and the terms of service and exchange of valuable commodities? To answer this question, the nature of negotiations and soliciting has to be addressed. In Muscovy, the public was censored and public criticism often needed forceful backing akin to a rebellion to make itself heard. How could negotiation take place under such conditions? In this regard, perhaps, Siberia differed most from the rest of Muscovy. The use of institutions diverged on both sides of the Urals, not least since frontier conditions isolated each town – and even more so a cossack group in the Taiga or the steppe – to a greater or lesser degree from influences outside its local area. Still, these men were in particular need of contacts to Moscow, the voevodas, and the chancellery system, for the source of their livelihood were various kinds of trade or services delivered to merchants. Since the addressee of litigation was in all cases a Moscow chancellery or the tsar, it was essential that an institution common to both Siberia and Moscow was invoked. Social actors have commonly used institutions such as monarchy to express contradictory concerns. In doing so, litigants as well as wirepullers had to rely on an approved language, claiming to derive from the fonts of monarchy rather than challenging its foundations. Cossacks – among others – learned to apply this language in a suitable way to convey their concerns. To explain this behaviour, this study makes use of recent developments in the analysis of institutions. In this thesis, institutions are seen as institutional mechanisms, consisting of concepts, patterns of behaviour and symbolic representations of their aims. The double aspect of "instrumental" and "symbolic" effects inherent in institutions conceals to a large degree how institutions work. Institutions can be envisaged as "symbolic orders" – not implying that institutions are "just"

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[69] Shveikovskaia, E.N., *Gosudarstvo i krest'iane Rossii*, Moscow 1997; Stevens, Carol, *Soldiers on the Steppe*, Illinois UP 1995

emblematic, but that every "order" bears a – more or less distinct – institutional form, in which its principles are expressed. This can be conveyed in any institutionally regulated action, in gestures and material signs. What usually, even in scientific vocabulary, is called an institution is on closer examination an organisation or a form of interaction, in which the visibility of its order is put on centre stage: a church, state, family and kinship, educational establishments, sometimes also large-scale enterprises.[70]

It is true that organisations cannot exist without institutional mechanisms. However, institutional mechanisms can exist without organisations, for example in the etiquette governing letter-writing, the socially elaborated norms and symbols of romantic love or heightened forms of friendship. On the other hand, to codify and make even these norms controllable by specialists, an organisation can be established, as in the eighteenth-century German "friendship alliances" (*Freundschaftsbünde*). Thus an institutional mechanism – perhaps a better term than "institution" – can be sustained as mere conventions, requiring a social base but not a permanent organisation[71], as was the case with the *Personenverbände* of the Siberian cossacks.

Such a notion provides a possible resolution of recent controversies about the form of Muscovite government in the seventeenth century. The original meaning of the obligatory self-ascription as "slave of the tsar" in the regalian salutation contained in petitions or, according to social rank and group, "orphan of the sovereign" was eroded over a long time and even used in private correspondence.[72] Kivelson has clarified Muscovites' preference for the honourable state of servitude, which in their eyes was ethically different from that of abject slaves serving the infidels or unjust masters. To bring oneself into an unfree position could be an active, self-defending action: if the tax base eroded and neighbours fled wilfully, the

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[70] Rehberg, Karl-Siegbert, "Institutionenwandel und Funktionsveränderung des Symbolischen", in: Göhler, Gerhard (ed.), *Institutionenwandel*, Opladen 1997, 94-120, here: 102

[71] Rehberg, "Institutionenwandel", 102; idem, "Wie verändern sich Institutionen?", in: ibid., 21-56; Stölting, Gerhard, "Wandel und Kontinuität der Institutionen", in: ibid., 181-203; Duchhardt, Heinz, Gert Melville (eds.), *Im Spannungsfeld von Recht und Ritual*, Köln 1997; Melville, Gert, *Institutionalität und Symbolisierung*, Köln 2001; Schimmelpfennig, Bernhard, "Das Papsttum im Mittelalter: eine Institution?", in: Melville, *Institutionen*, 209-29

[72] Poe, Marshall, "What Did Russians Mean When They Called Themselves ‚Slaves of the Tsar'?", *SR* vol.57 no.3 (1998), 585-608, here: 599-608

subsistence, dignity, and cultural values of those left behind were endangered. Therefore the townspeople and peasants demanding the return of refugees – eventually, but unintendedly, leading to their own enserfment – did not demonstrate a spiteful, self-enslaving mentality, but aimed at securing fundamental rights of survival, order and continuity. On the one hand, the master who was considered rightful and observed Orthodox custom – for example, feeding them in case of bad harvests that were frequent due to climatic conditions at the margin of agricultural feasibility, even though in reality that obligation was naturally not always and by everyone observed – was allowed to do almost everything to them. On the other hand, there was still a notion of obligations that could mean that someone who acquired these powers without proper justification could be considered a sham. Considering the unsafe conditions in Muscovy, the tsar and chancellery system did a remarkably good job in propagating the tsar's image of piousness that secured the most basic needs and values – such as redeeming the vast numbers of captives taken during small-scale nomad raids that trickled through the frontier defences.[73] Cash-starved Muscovy produced a welter of economic failures, and although the state was part of the process, it was not the only reason for this condition; perhaps Muscovites were right if they perceived the state's role as rather relieving. In this sense, in seventeenth-century Muscovite experience slavery was mostly preferably compared to an often – though not always and to everybody – exceedingly unsafe state of freedom or "at will" (*samovol'no*) – a notion that carried implications for both the victims and the perpetrators of acts of rebellion that were often difficult to distinguish from burgeoning criminality.[74] It should be remembered, however, that the Muscovite nexus between enserfment, illegal migration, and criminality cannot be observed in Siberia.[75]

However, the meaning of the salutation was not so much dependent on changing connotations of the words, but rather on the actual balance of power, which according to Goldfrank and others was tilted decidedly to the advantage of the tsar.[76]

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[73] On the implications of redemption of captives organised by the state, see 19, 39.

[74] Kivelson, Valerie, "Bitter Slavery and Pious Servitude: Muscovite Freedom and its Critics", in: Crummey, Robert (ed.), *Russische und Ukrainische Geschichte*, Wiesbaden 2001, 109-19, here: 115

[75] See 297-8.

[76] Goldfrank, David, "Aristotle, Bodin and Montesquieu to the Rescue: Making Sense of the Despotism Issue", in: Crummey, *Russische*, 41-53, here: 42, 44

Among Goldfrank's more convincing arguments are fiscal demands, requirements to serve and impoverishment by demands of services, and the crown's sense of its prerogatives – according to this view, *consilium* in Russia never bound the ruler – which prevented any coalescence of classes or of estates demanding political rights.[77] Furthermore, the prohibition of private societies, clubs, and education until the second half of the century and the sowing of mutual distrust via *slovo i delo gosudarevo* – the obligatory denunciation of broadly defined utterances and actions directed against the tsar – thus rendered individuals incapable of resolute action.[78] Yet as this thesis will demonstrate, in Siberia at least, the balance of power was much more equal. Western historiography has overlooked this, since the main agent of power in Siberia, the cossacks, seemed organisationally elusive.[79] However, flexibility should not be misunderstood as absence of structure. More inclined to take seriously the evidence of everyday life than narrowly-confined legal or constitutional issues, Soviet historians have provided deep but ill-defined insights which have until now proven difficult to reconcile with general historical terms and concepts. Intriguingly, in this respect, Pokrovskii and Aleksandrov have claimed that the sovereign's word and affair[80] (*slovo i delo gosudarevo*) promoted unity and resolute action in Siberia, despite the understanding of this principle by Goldfrank and others for Muscovy west of the Urals. This, in turn, contradicts their own conviction that there was a unified "political structure" on both sides of the Urals as well as A.M. Kantor's recent overstated claim that the ideal sovereign of the "democratic masses" in the *posad* was secular, limited by codified law and by the elective character of an individual's power.[81] Thus, a coherent explanation of local resolute action in the framework of the institutional culture of empire is lacking.[82]

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[77] Torke, Hans-Joachim, *Die Staatsbedingte Gesellschaft im Moskauer Reich*, Leiden 1974, 275-83. The status of the *Boiar duma* is still discussed – recent contributions stress its ritual properties, and doubt that either the sovereign or the boyars enjoyed a monopoly on political power. See Bogatyrev, Sergei, *The Sovereign and His Counsellors*, Saarijärvi 2000, 220-2

[78] Goldfrank, "Despotism", 44; Hellie, Richard, "The Origins of Denunciation in Muscovy", in: Fitzpatrick, Sheila (ed.), *Petitions and Denunciations in Russia*, Idyllwild/CA 1997; Lapman, Mark, *Political Denunciation in Muscovy*, Harvard 1981; Keenan, Edward, "Muscovite Political Folkways", *RR* vol.45 (1986), 115-81

[79] Lantzeff, *Siberia*, 80-6; Dmytryshyn, "Apparatus", 27, 30

[80] The standard translation of *slovo i delo gosudarevo* is 'sovereign's word and deed'. For reasons to be explained in Chapter III, this work will translate it as 'sovereign's word and affair'.

[81] Pokrovskii and Aleksandrov base their claim exclusively on the Moscow rebellion 1648-9: Aleksandrov, *Vlast'*, 224-33, 353; Pokrovskii, N.N., "Sibirskie materialy po 'slovu i delu

Analysis of the "sovereign's word and affair" (chapter III) with the institutionalist toolbox sheds new light on a protracted controversy. In the last two decades, several approaches have been suggested for the study of the particularistic interests and the aspect of litigation expressed in the terms of the sovereign's affair, which is identified as an ideology. As Perrie concludes, their drawback is the impossibility of reconciling monarchist illusions of the rebels with their insubordination to the monarch's decrees, especially when the latter became more openly condemning of the rebels' actions.[83] All these approaches to the sovereign's affair fall short of resolving a general problem – how could both cossacks and their superiors appeal to the sovereign's word and affair to uphold divergent interests, given that they had to make use of the same unified symbolic order in which the arbitrary decision of the tsar was considered indispensable?

Rehberg, Schimmelpfennig and other recent theorists of institutions agree that institutions often function exactly in this way. Institutions provided a common point of reference for divergent interests. The actual meaning of empire, of papal authority, of English, French or German monarchy was never beyond dispute. Relative to specific localities, social groups, time and, in general, the distribution of power in society, divergent interpretations of an institution were prevalent. These interpretations were always contested and at the same time, to foster stability and permanence in a social reality that is always more prone to institutional break-down, claimed to derive from authoritative sources and to be expressed in approved idioms. To stress this function of a forum for divergent interests within what was considered

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gosudarevu'", in: idem (ed.), *Istochniki po istorii obshchestvennogo mysli i kultury epokhi pozdnego feodalizma*, Novosibirsk 1988, 24-61. Kantor, A.M., "Obshchina, mir, gosudar', bunt: problemy sotsial'nogo razvitiia v obshchestvennoi mysli demokraticheskikh sloev posada 2-i poloviny XVII v.", in: *Reformy 2-i poloviny XVII-XIX v.: podgotovka, provedenie, rezul'taty*, Moscow 1989, 24-43, here: 36. See Lukin's review: Lukin, P.V., *Narodnye predstavleniia o gosudarstvennoi vlasti v Rossii XVII veka*, Moscow 2000, 6

[82] Lukin concentrates on the archival sources of the sovereign's word, leaving aside rebellions: *Predstavleniia*, 6.

[83] Perrie, Maureen, "Popular Monarchism", in: Hosking, *Reinterpreting*, 156-69, here: 163; idem, "Indecent, Unseemly and Inappropriate Words", *FzGO* vol.58, 143-9; Ditiatin, I.I., *Rol' chelobitii i zemskikh zoborov*, Rostov-on-Don 1905. Madariaga, Isabel, *Russia in the Age of Catherine the Great*, London 1981; Kivelson, Valerie, "The Devil Stole His Mind", *AHR* vol.98 no.3 (1993), 733-756

divine providence, or what in modern organisations is a set of rules and symbolic representations, these authors have coined the term "*leitidea*".[84]

An institution is contested since those who are physically, intellectually and socially capable of claiming it for their actions can apply it as a resource of power.[85] Institutional analysis identifies different leitideas competing for the legitimate interpretation of an institution. A "leitidea" is a determination of what "the state", the Roman Catholic Church, "art" etc., or "the" sovereign's affair should be at a given moment. Institutional analysis shows that this selectively gains acceptance from among a multitude of leitideas, which compete and are contested. Every leitidea is only temporarily successful by being set apart from and above a complex of often-incompatible potential orientations. Since the leitidea is a product of struggle and a synthesis of contradicting issues, it disowns many of the competing senses and drafts of order. Yet this is the very reason why its validity is never uncontested and depends on different places, situations, interests and social groups. The leitidea of empire, of papalism[86], of French, English or German monarchy was always contested and at the same time, from the perspectives of divergent needs was claimed as being unified, secured from the authentic sources and therefore irrefutable.[87] Institutional analysis contributes to the study of pre-modern communication since it allows for the expression of divergent interests within the limits of a shared institution, for example the sovereign's word and affair, or service.[88]

The latter argument is important for the history of the Muscovite empire. A broad survey of the literature on the Muscovite seventeenth century and beyond is necessary, however, before returning to the issue of institutions. Recent studies

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[84] Rehberg, "Institutionenwandel", 103. The German "*Leitidee*" is not straightforward to translate, as, for example "*Leitmotiv*", rendered in English as leitmotif. Other similar applications of "*Leit*" include "*Leitstern*" (leading star; beacon), as in the phrase 'beacon of investigative journalism', express an analogous sense of contestation of a shared institution.

[85] Maset, Michael, *Diskurs, Macht und Geschichte*, Frankfurt/Main 2002, 78, 82; Foucault, Michel, "Das Subjekt und die Macht", in: Dreyfus, Hubert L. (ed.), *Michel Foucault*, Frankfurt/Main 1987, 241-61, here: 257; Burkitt, Ian, "Overcoming Metaphysics. Elias and Foucault on Power and Freedom", in: *Philosophy of the Social Sciences* vol. 23 (1993), 50-72, 56

[86] Schimmelpfennig, "Papsttum"

[87] Rehberg, "Institutionenwandel", 103

[88] In this sense, a denunciation is an action – and possibly a moral evaluation – and not an institution. Even Muscovites did not appreciate denunciation unconditionally. See Pokrovskii, N.N., "Zakonodatel'nye istochniki petrovskogo vremeni o 'slove i dele gosudarevom'", in: *Publitsistika i istoricheskie sochineniia perioda feodalizma*, Novosibirsk 1989, 77-95

concentrating on Muscovy's regions and local politics have revealed that the centre often found it hard to influence them, and was forced to make significant concessions. Even after the final defeat of the Solovki monastery revolt in 1676 monks in this and other great northern monasteries pursued politics independent of the ecclesiastical authorities. Schismatic monasteries and congregations in other regions and in particular in Karelia were often inspired by particularistic interest.[89] Extensive Moscow carters' *slobody* were left off the hook of police control.[90] The chancelleries supported northern peasants in their struggles with landlords encroaching on their rights and lands.[91] Far from being the all-controlling central power, Moscow even had to compromise with the southern frontier garrisons which were the instruments of its authority.[92] As late as the early 1680s, responsiveness to southern needs was an important element to the success of military reform since southerners enjoyed the opportunity to renegotiate their relationship by temporarily putting themselves out of reach. Regarding food supplies, Moscow made far-reaching concessions, despite the negative implications for such essential issues as military reform.[93] For the central Russian provinces, Kivelson stresses the lack of personnel in voevoda offices, therefore decrees disapproved by local strongmen and their rivals often could not be carried out. Patronage networks including locals and central chancellery staff formed parallel structures of power.[94] Already to contemporaries the seventeenth century was known as the "rebellious century"[95], a condition constraining the tsar's rule. Perhaps the only area under Moscow's unrestricted sway was the western provinces suffering from the burdens of war,

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[89] See the contributions to the Vienna conference 2003: Michels, Georg, "The Monastic Reforms of Archbishop Afanasii of Kholmogory (1682-1702), earlier version in: Geraci, Robert (ed.), *Of Religion and Empire*, Ithaca 2001; idem, *At War with the Church*, Stanford 1999; idem, "The Violent Old Belief", *RH* vol.19.1-4 (1992), 203-29

[90] Schmidt, Christoph, *Sozialkontrolle in Moskau*, Stuttgart 1996, 228-9, 402-408; Rustemeyer, Angela, "Verrat und ungehörige Worte", *FzOG* vol.56 (2000), 257-272, here: 271

[91] Shveikovskaia, *Gosudarstvo*, 216-59; Kamkin, A.V., "Russkii Sever i Moskovskii tsentr v XV-XVII vekakh", paper, Vienna 2003. See now Nolte, Hans-Heinrich, "Autonomien im vorpetrinischen Rußland", in: Becker, Jürgen (ed.), *Der zusammengesetzte Staat in der Frühen Neuzeit*, Berlin: forthcoming.

[92] Glaz'ev, V.N., "Mestnoe upravlenie na iuge Rossii v XVII v.", paper, Vienna 2003.

[93] Stevens, *Soldiers*, 162-4; Davies, Brian, "Village into Garrison", *RR*, vol.51 (Oct1992), 481-501; idem, "The Politics of Give and Take", in: Kleimola, A.M. (ed.), *Culture and Identity in Muscovy 1359-1584*, Moscow 1997, 39-67.

[94] Kivelson, *Autocracy*, 167-73, 189, 267

[95] Torke, *Staatsbedingte*, 216

which the tsar could discipline through the military.[96] In what amounts to a significant shift of focus on a new basis of evidence, the question has therefore been raised as to what the centre could contribute to regional politics, and how far and by what means it could control the regions. It is open to question, however, as to whether 'strategy' is too rational a term to describe many aspects of the behaviour of local people.[97]

In the seventeenth century, Moscow presided over an ethnically and socially complex empire, which it sought to govern by a variety of means. In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries Muscovy aggressively expanded its territory when the sway of the Mongol Empire and its successors yielded to progressive decline and fragmentation. This reaction to the regional power vacuum, which was further exacerbated by the decline of the Teutonic Order, betrayed no unusual messianic self-conception, nor plans for world-domination or nomadic spirit.[98] Moscow's rulers made use of Orthodox concepts and the alleged oppression of Orthodox believers in neighbouring countries to justify their military exploits. Such practices can also be found elsewhere in Europe.[99]

Moscow's European neighbours developed a similar appetite for conquest. Spain, Portugal, the Netherlands and Britain looked overseas by the sixteenth century, long before they had developed theories of mercantilism or absolutism to legitimise expansion. The Habsburgs and Jagiellonians strove to include into their reigns territories towards the steppe frontier eastward from the Danube toward the Black Sea, although later in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the *szlachta* often

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[96] Iakovlev, A.I., *Namestnich'i, gubnyia i zemskiia ustavnyia gramoty*, Moscow 1909, 188; Davies, Brian, "The Second Chigirin Campaign", in: Lohr, Eric (ed.), *Military and Society in Russia*, Köln 2002, 97-118, here: 105, 109-11; Torke, *Staatsbedingte*, 236-8. However, Pskov was different: ibid., 241-3

[97] I am grateful to Nancy Kollmann for expressing similar concerns at the Vienna conference 2003. See also her instructive chapter "Strategies of Integration", *Honor*, 169-202.

[98] Arnold Toynbee popularised the idea that Moscow's expansionism was a "Byzantine heritage" of imperialism: *Civilizations on Trial*, New York 1948, 164-83. V.O. Kliuchevskii created a "frontier thesis" interpretation of the Russians as permanently colonizing lands considered, however, as empty: "Kurs russkoi istorii", in: *Sochineniia*, 5 vols., Moscow 1956-58, vol.I, lect.2. The messianic view is often associated with the "Third Rome" theory, but that is a misapprehension. Its original text primarily calls for the piety of the ruler and the role of the church. See the overview of literature: Kollmann, Nancy, *By Honor Bound*, Ithaca 1999, 6. Kämpfer, Frank, "Die Lehre vom Dritten Rom – *pivotal moment*, historiographische Folklore?", *JBGO* vol.49 (2001), 430-41

[99] Bogatyrev, Sergei, "Battle for the Divine Sophia?", in: Lohr, *Military*, 325-64. Schmidt-Biggemann, Wilhelm, "Apokalypse und Millenarismus im Dreißigjährigen Krieg", in: Bußmann, Klaus (ed.), *1648*, Textband I, 262-3

checked ambitious war plans in Poland-Lithuania. These empires answered variously to political and economic needs and pressures and to dynastic interests. In Muscovy's case, economic pressures alone were strong enough, although Moscow may not have assessed the real value of some of the lands it sought to conquer.[100] Within its fifteenth-century borders, natural resources were scarce and land was unproductive because of poor soil, poorly timed precipitation and a short growing season.[101] Expansion provided income from the Siberian fur trade and from export and transit trade along major trade routes of the Volga and White Sea, as well as new lands and peasant subjects to be distributed among the nobles. The *pomest'e* form of land distribution was one institution fostering integration of the realm, while sustaining a hunger for land fuelled by the eastern Slavic custom of partible inheritance; in the long run, however, this was a utopian promise. The Baltic provinces were attractive due to the higher population density, which promised the work force that was the resource most in demand on Muscovite estates.[102] Coercion and a sense for traditional institutions were both used to further viable structures of governance.

How central control was possible at all under early modern conditions which did not provide most of the means of communication we are used to, under conditions of adverse climate, an impoverished countryside and with enormous distances to be covered is a question historiography has long answered along conventional lines. Concerning Muscovy as a whole, with too great an emphasis on the perhaps untypical reign of Ivan IV, historians have pointed out that autocracy served as a kind of Procrustean bed, cutting off locally assertive communities militarily and by resettling them.[103] Local elected officials and the voevodas, Moscow's representatives in the provinces, who frequently asked for detailed orders to guide their actions, were taken at face value to prove that local initiative was curtailed in

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[100] Frost, Robert I., *The Northern Wars*, Harlow 2000, 15. Filiushkin, Aleksandr, in: Schippan, Michael (report), "Conference on Political and Cultural Relations between Russia and the Baltic Region States, 30th April–4th May 2003, Narva", in: *h-soz-u-kult*, >http://hsozkult.geschichte.hu-berlin.de/tagungsberichte/id=268<.

[101] Kollmann, *Honor*, 5-6. On climate, see Wein, Norbert, *Sibirien*, Gotha 1999; Symons, Leslie, *The Soviet Union*, London 1990, chapters 3-4, and Dewdney, John, *A Geography of the Soviet Union*, Oxford 1979, chapt.2

[102] Frost, *Northern*, 81-2. When repressing the Razin revolt, Smolensk *szlachta* indiscriminately captured rebels and kin of victims to populate their estates: Rustemeyer, Angela, "Shliakhta, krest'iane i prestupleniia protiv gosudaria v Smolenske (1654-1761)", paper, Vienna 2003, 9.

[103] On Ivan IV's own perception of his reign, see Steindorff, Ludwig, "Mehr als eine Frage der Ehre", *JBGO* vol.51,3 (2003), 342-366, here: 359

favour of centralised control. Yet this policy ended in disarray, plunging the nascent empire into a period of internal troubles at the turn of the sixteenth century. Andreas Kappeler has provided a more subtle explanation noting that the Muscovite political system included different modes of integration and various kinds of social organisations, often without changing them, cultivating and co-opting local elites.[104] Yet while it is part of the explanation that local nobles became part of the governing elites, this still does not completely explain how Moscow could exert any influence on the increasing number of regions it governed. Kivelson has pointed out that even the *pomest'e*, long considered the main tool in a conscious effort at uprooting and homogenising the nobility and gentry, did not guarantee that state orders were obeyed in the regions. Apart from curbing attempts at separation, this instrument did not much improve the state's authority over these territories. Resettled gentry developed a new sense of local community and tended to concentrate their lands within one or a few rather circumscribed provinces. Contributing to our understanding of centre-periphery relations, Kivelson envisions relations between Moscow and the central provinces through the prism of noble patronage networks, forming a parallel power structure to the official bureaucracy. At the apex of these competing networks stood the high and middling nobility in the Moscow chancelleries, related to local figureheads who could mobilise sufficient support among neighbours and among their own peasants. Clients of particular officials at the centre, these men from among the provincial gentry provided pressure groups drawn from the local gentry and their peasants to defend their more circumscribed local interests. Bushkovitch has shown that even under Peter I, noble networks continued to influence high politics.[105]

Historians of Siberia have tended to portray patronage networks as proof of an authoritarian society, unfolding throughout the seventeenth century, which pushed aside earlier, more participative modes of social life. Yet in terms of domination, patronage had more ambivalent effects than is often thought, particularly in the Siberian trading frontier. Where significant trade and dangerous steppe frontier conditions combined to create regional bottlenecks, the *Personenverband* wielded

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[104] Kappeler, *Vielvölkerreich*, 33
[105] Kivelson, *Autocracy*, 154-181; Bushkovitch, Paul, *Peter the Great*, Cambridge 2001, 442-4

important powers. Perhaps surprisingly, in distant Siberia patronage was also available closer to the local level than in central Muscovy due to the peculiar administrative structure.[106] Moscow aimed to overcome early-modern conditions of undergovernment and the potential threat of separatism[107], exacerbated by Siberian distances and bad communications by establishing the *razriad*-system, yet this move could be effective only by conceding significant political influence to local power-brokers.[108] Thus, the *Personenverband* often balanced the terms of an unequal relationship implied by patronage toward its own advantage.[109]

Nancy Kollmann has chosen another approach, demonstrating that in Muscovy, the defence of personal honour of increasing parts of the population by the tsar and his courts was one of the means employed by the centre to integrate the empire.[110] In Siberia, too, this was an important means of projecting one's acclaim among the cossacks, not least since honour was a precondition for being elected to the more responsible positions. Although the tsar and his courts in theory protected honour, it depended on the *Personenverband*, since election documents had to be signed by cossacks.[111]

In his influential account of Siberia's administration in the seventeenth century, Lantzeff overlooked patronage issues. He claimed that Siberia's administration was akin to a huge business enterprise on the part of the Muscovite government. The "modern" bureaucratic features he noted in the administration rested on several assumptions that recent researchers have rejected.[112] They no longer perceive the great princely clans and the non-titled families of royal servitors as constant rivals in a struggle for power at court, but rather as interwoven strands in the fabric of a single elite. Contrary to some earlier interpretations, these clans and the tsar shared a common interest in the effectiveness of the government and the well-being of the realm. They have also rejected the earlier interpretation that Muscovite politics can be understood as the struggle of a declining court aristocracy to defend its power

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[106] Cf. Kivelson, *Autocracy*, 159
[107] See 71-6
[108] See 131-3
[109] See 241-2, passim
[110] Kollmann, *Honor*
[111] See (election) 61, 63, 66, 67, 78, 82-3, 89-94, 98, 122-3, 134, 185, 233, 237, 243, 270, 280-2, 286-7; (honour and election) 244; (honour) 65, 143-5, 150, 152, 193, 213, 253-4, 279, 288, 290
[112] Lantzeff, *Siberia*, 200-1

against the challenge of a rising provincial gentry.[113] For the same reason, the *d'iaks* whom Lantzeff considered the harbingers of bureaucratisation accompanied voevodas only during the initial decades of the seventeenth century to some of the more important destinations in Siberia.[114] Later, the role of *d'iaki*, who were raised from the lower ranks of Muscovite society to become heads of chancelleries, diminished as nobles noticed the increasing power of the administration. Brown has questioned the independence of the *d'iaki*, whom Lantzeff considered the harbingers of bureaucratisation, from court factions. In Brown's reading, all chancellery personnel from the loftiest boyar to the humblest scribe sought their niche where they could make a living. They could rely on their own chancellery staff to defend their interests, but not on the staff of other chancelleries.[115] The rule that two voevodas held a town in a sort of collegiate arrangement was applicable only to bigger, administratively more significant towns that yielded more revenues.[116]

Customs administration was another field in which the Siberian chancellery tried to introduce as much accountability as possible. The Siberian chancellery aimed to effect this by employing skilfully selected personnel from different social groups and by adapting controls to particular situations. Merchants from larger towns in Siberia and European Russia staffed the customs houses in the main towns. This was a profitable office since Siberian Russians petitioned for the honour of being allowed to select customs officials among their own as soon as local communities became solvent enough to guarantee the exact and profitable performance of this office. However, voevodas often infringed on the business of the customs officer (*tamozhennaia golova*). Both were instructed to supervise and report each other's illegal trading activities, but only the customs officer, always chosen in a different town, enjoyed independence – he was exempt from the voevoda's jurisdiction, but did not have autonomous powers of command.[117] In some rebellions, the customs officer provided the seals needed to safeguard the passage of petitioners to the tsar.

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[113] Kobrin, V.B., *Vlast' i sobstvennost' v srednevekovoi Rossii (XV-XVI vv.)*, Moscow 1985. See other major contributions to this line of inquiry by Veselovskii, Zimin, S.O. Shmidt, M.E. Bychkova, A.L.Stanislavskii, Gustave Alef, Ann Kleimola, Samuel Baron, Hartmut Rüss and Robert Crummey.

[114] Vershinin, *Voevodskoe*, 148-183

[115] Brown, Peter, "Guarding the Gate-keepers", *JBGO* vol.50.3 (2002), 224-245, here: 244

[116] Vershinin, *Voevodskoe*, 148-183

[117] Lantzeff, *Siberia*, 116-22

They sometimes shared a common interest since voevodas allied with the great Moscow merchants and their representatives to smooth their illegal business and for mutual assistance with credit, safeguarding and intercession in the Siberian chancellery.[118] In smaller settlements sworn men (*tselovalniki*) were chosen to supervise tax collection. Where local merchants were absent but trade was strong, cossacks were sometimes chosen for this office. The guards patrolling roads between Siberia and European Russia to prevent smuggling were also recruited from cossacks and sworn men. At the official border post of Verkhotur'e, voevodas were controlled on entering and leaving Siberia. Fixed amounts of specified wares and moneys were assigned to every position, which voevodas could not exceed in theory; in practice, however, a more flexible attitude prevailed. Even so, to prevent excessive smuggling, voevodas' wares were sealed and listed at the local customs house. Similar controls applied to merchants and trappers, who were controlled at each customs station, where they also had to pay the tithe on their wares.[119]

Consequently, Siberian administration cannot be regarded as "modern" or "bureaucratic", or at least as bureaucratic only in a more restricted sense, as chapter IV will show in detail. Ultimately, the Siberian chancellery could not rely exclusively on established procedure to extract revenues from Siberia. Lantzeff acknowledged this when noting that the feeding practices of earlier times marred orderly administration. Nevertheless, he did not reconcile his finding with his wider assertion that the evident effectiveness of Siberian administrative practices represented "a step toward the bureaucratic administration of more modern times".[120] It also remains unclear how the Siberian chancellery managed to contribute, according to the more conservative estimates, on average about ten per cent of the state's budget; moreover, it was rare convertible revenue.[121] As elsewhere in the early modern era, the tsars had to rely on established local communities or elites to

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[118] Aleksandrov, *Vlast'*, 136-9

[119] Lantzeff, *Siberia*, 122-3

[120] Ibid., 201, 203, 205

[121] Ibid., 154; Fisher, *Fur*, 120. For other estimates, see Miliukov, P.N., "Gosudarstvennoe khoziaistvo Rossii", *ZhMNP* CCLXXI (October 1890), 1-107, here: 346; Vernadskii, G.V., "Protiv solntsa", *Russkaia mysl'* (January 1914), 63. Kotoshikhin admitted that he could not trust his memory; however, he believed the yearly shipment of furs was worth 600,000 roubles: Kotošixin, *Rossii*, 106 fol.135^{v} co, which would be equivalent to one fourth of the budget. See illustration I.

pursue their aim of increasing returns;[122] in the case of Siberia, these were mainly the cossacks. What, then, were the incentives for loyal service to the tsar?

Answers to the problem of integration provided for Siberia rely on the military preponderance of the musket when combined with fortifications and other military innovations. Providing an advantage in defensive situations, they nevertheless did not help much when collecting *iasak*. In the forests, unwieldy muskets were often less useful than quick loading and silent bows. Another explanation concentrates on the waterway system allowing rapid moving across the sub-continent.[123] Nevertheless, the rivers still forced Muscovite traders, cossacks and couriers to travel huge distances across burdensome portages. Natural networks of transportation and technical innovations do not explain how such an enterprise was organised. One of the earliest historians of Siberia, Gerhard Müller, stressed the role of the state to explain the apparent success of Muscovite colonisation of Siberia, but did not address many of the problems of such an approach.[124] Early modern princely states could find it difficult to effectively govern even a town like Leonberg, close by the residency in southwest Germany.[125] An oft-repeated saying goes "the sky is high and the tsar is far away". While the latter presumption cannot be denied, treating distance as a given parameter misses the main point. Over the centuries, Russians have shown often enough that they disregarded distance to a degree difficult to imagine in most European environments. This disregard of distance depended on the institutional environment. What counted was that the focal points of the trading network, the central markets, the trading posts and fortresses were organised by common institutions. On their way to or from Moscow, Siberian cossacks did not ask for the "essence" of institutions, or which social structure deserved the name institution. They were interested in institutional mechanisms that could stabilise social relations so overstretched in Siberian conditions. It was an accomplishment to transform the contingent into something "necessary" which "lasted", even if on closer inspection the actual change was visible. This aspect of coercing and restraining regulations,

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[122] Lieberman, Victor, "Transcending East-West Dichotomies", *MAS* vol.31.3 (1997), 463-546, here: 508-9

[123] Dmytryshyn, "Apparatus", 24; Lantzeff, *Siberia*, 87-9

[124] Miller, *Istoriia*, vol.I, 249-50, 273-7 and passim; see chapt.I.

[125] Landwehr, Achim, *Policey im Alltag*, Frankfurt/Main 2000

which nevertheless simultaneously empowered individuals and local communities is treated by institutional analysis. Institutional attainments can relieve, restrict, or function as a resource for producing something new and improve potentials of knowledge and interaction. In these capacities, they always have to be related to power potentialities, to privilege and overt as well as covert inequality. Social cohesion and the preconditions of each "legitimating belief" (Max Weber) are neither obvious nor adequately elucidated.[126] As long as cossacks could rely on these institutional structures and standards, even for recently-recruited and often impoverished cossacks, the dangers of a journey through the steppe frontier lasting up to nearly a year in one direction could become calculable. Institutions such as the sovereign's affair, salary, partial tax-exemptions, material support for travelling to Moscow, elections and the right to give advice to the commander or voevoda also amounted to privilege. It rendered cossack status in Siberia attractive to vagrants, natives, peasants and even merchants or their relatives.

Since authority in the steppe had collapsed due to the disintegration of the successor states of the Mongol empire, in the resulting power vacuum, organisation was the most sought after resource. In its absence, the southern borderlands depopulated due to frequent raids from nomad groups, which had an inclination to split and, despite certain autochthonous forms of obedience, engaged in a "search for central authority" which could be extended to outside forces.[127] Once such an organisation was established, merchants from Bukhara changed their trading routes to end at Tobol'sk, where they established permanent representatives – the first step towards direct Russo-Chinese trade.[128] While organisations rely on institutional mechanisms, these cannot be set up quickly. Establishing institutions entails huge "hidden" costs, since they depend on acceptance by a wide array of social organisations and professional fields. It is this wide applicability of an institution and the expected behaviour that makes it attractive and provides tangible benefits to agents. Consequently, it is also very expensive to change institutions – the more

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[126] Rehberg, "Institutionenwandel ", 103-4

[127] Kumke, *Geführte*, 33; Khodarkovsky, *Steppe*, 7-34

[128] Penrose, G.L., "Inner Asian Influences on the Earliest Russo-Chinese Contacts", *RII* (1992) vol.19 (1-4), 361-92, here: 388-92

broadly they are disseminated, the more agents have to change their habits and their acquired behaviour.[129]

It was therefore a momentous decision of the Moscow grand princes to adopt the title of tsar, resounding in the nomad societies in the form of the "White tsar/khan". The purported Chinggisid descent was of particular use to the cossacks, drawing their name from outcasts of the Tatar/Mongol army.[130] Throughout the Siberian steppe frontier, adoption of the title by the grand princes meant that anyone who accepted the suzerainty of the Moscow tsar enjoyed tangible benefits in interaction and trade with those nomads that sought loose alliance and trade opportunities in Muscovy rather than with its enemies.[131] As shown in chapter I, Siberian cossacks grasped this reality. It is these co-ordinating services the tsars provided that historians have underestimated. They were also substantial in the organisation of frontier defences and the redemption of slaves captured by nomad bands throughout the southern frontier. Redemption was big business and is vastly underestimated in historiography; it had a significant impact on patterns of Muscovite (under-) urbanisation and on the perception of the tsar as rightful Orthodox ruler.[132]

Institutional coordination and a chance of obtaining a favourable outcome kept a stream of petitions flowing – seventy percent of personal petitions were confirmed and signed by the tsar or the chancellery; reiteration was prohibited only if the tsar had signed a definite decree.[133] Power was generated from a torrent of information collected, documented and compared in the chancelleries. Yet unlike the stern and brutal reactions to cossack and peasant rebellions on the western side of the Urals[134], town rebellions in Siberia were much more difficult to suppress. Any concentration of troops was too expensive to supply, and of necessity would have depleted the fur resources, which were paramount in any consideration of Siberian politics. In Siberia, investigations and trials, good leadership, concessions and trade

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[129] Krasner, S.D., "Sovereignty. An Institutional Perspective", *CPS* vol.21 no.1 (April 1988), 81; Offe, Claus, *Designing Institutions for East European Transitions*, Vienna 1994, 25-6

[130] See 76

[131] On pattern of interaction with nomad societies, see Khodarkovsky, *Steppe*, 221-9

[132] Davies, *Governors*, vols. 1-2; Khodarkovsky, *Steppe*, 7-8, 222-3

[133] Torke, *Staatsbedingte*, 89-91

[134] Avrich, *Rebels*, 109-10, 115; Moon, David, *The Russian Peasantry*, London 1999, 280-1

opportunities to a large degree took the place of centrally organised, naked force in the pacification of cossack rebellions.

The final chapter draws together the threads of the thesis by concentrating on one major incident, the Selenga rebellion of 1696 and its repercussions. Most cossack rebellions have been studied before, and we have a wealth of information about them. Chapter V, by focusing on a detailed study of one particular rebellion, applies the insights developed in the thesis to challenge traditional interpretations of this, the greatest Siberian cossack rising of the century, and sheds further light on the ways in which authority was negotiated between centre and periphery.

While conditions differed considerably concerning supply and trade opportunities, it is now clear that isolated steppe frontier outposts west of the Urals were otherwise treated in a somewhat similar way. They stood a certain, if reduced, chance of removing an unpopular voevoda, or of extending the tenure of a popular official.[135] Steppe frontier fortifications existed in a delicate balance which Moscow had to respect, although the terms changed. Nevertheless, for the seventeenth and most of the eighteenth centuries, the steppe in a more restricted sense remained an area the tsars aspired to rule, but could not effectively govern.[136]

Sources

This thesis is based in large part on the substantial documentation generated by the Russian government of Siberia which is still held in central Russian archives, largely in the Siberian Chancery and in local archives. Though copious, the nature of Russian bureaucratic record-keeping means that there are substantial problems in using these materials, not least in the one-sidedness and formulaic nature of the welter of official documentation, which is frequently repetitive and has to be read with care, revealing some of the most valuable information only between the lines. Petitions written by local cossacks therefore provide a valuable different perspective, and this study therefore draws heavily on them. Even these petitions, however, are written in an official, formulaic style, since they were directed to the tsar and his local representatives.

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[135] Glaz'ev, "Mestnoe", 9; Stevens, *Soldiers*
[136] Khodarkovsky, *Steppe*, 223-9

A number of published document collections provide, to a certain, if restricted extent, remedies to this situation. There are some surviving private letters by Siberian cossacks, which are revealing for the way cossacks articulated themselves in non-official documents, although they are rather sparse in expression and, compared to the kind of sources that historians of Western Europe find, they are very few;[137] similarly, there are no surviving diaries by cossacks. Cossacks could express themselves in writing, as the manifold reports on their travels abroad testify, but these do not contain the kind of information needed for this study. Descriptions by foreign travellers and German ambassadors and an officer in the tsar's service add some colour to the overly dry chancellery style that is so characteristic of the official documents.[138] Some valuable materials on the church, on annals and on towns – containing sources on cossacks, too – have been edited in the 1980s-90s.[139] Printed primary sources have also been used in the first four chapters to broaden the regional basis of the investigation of Siberian cossack institutions.

In describing cossack and chancellery organisation and the elements of the institutional culture, I have used a multitude of sources both published and unpublished. Most of the sources on which I have drawn in chapter I are found in the papers of the Irkutsk *prikaznaia izba*. Particularly revealing cases that have, to my knowledge, not been used are sometimes found between other papers;[140] although the files have been described in detail, these descriptions can be misleading or incomplete. The recent publications of sources related to towns and the copy-book of the Tobol'sk archbishopric have proven very helpful for materials on cossack self-

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[137] *Gramotki XVII-nachala XVIII veka*, Moscow 1969; Aleksandrov, V.A., "Materialy o narodnykh dvizheniakh v Sibiri v kontse XVII veka", *Arkheograficheskii ezhegodnik za 1961 god*, Moscow 1962, no.1/2, 345-82

[138] Alekseev, M.P. (ed.), *Beschreibung der Reise auff Zibirien und weiter ins Land Orth und Stelle. Opisanie puteshestviia v Sibir' i dalee v razlichnye mestnosti strany. (Neizvestnoe opisanie puteshestviia v Sibir' inostrantsa v XVII veke.)*, Moscow 1936; idem (ed.), *Sibir' v izvestiiach inostrannykh puteshestvennikov i pisatelei (XIII-XVII vv.)*, 2 vols., Irkutsk 1932-36; Hundt, Michael (ed.), *Beschreibung der dreijährigen chinesischen Reise. Die russische Gesandtschaft von Moskau nach Peking 1692 bis 1695 in den Darstellungen von Eberhard Isbrand Ides und Adam Brand*, Stuttgart 1999; Ides, Izbrant; Adam Brand, *Zapiski o russkom posol'stve v Kitai (1692-1695)*, Moscow 1967; *Dwa polskie pamietniki z Syberii: XVII i XVIII wiek*, opracowanie zbiorowe pod redakcja naukowa Antoniego Kuczynskiego, Wroclaw, Warszawa 1996

[139] Pokrovskii, N.N.; E.K. Romodanovskaia (eds.), *Tobol'skii arkhiereiskii dom v XVII veke*, Novosibirsk 1993; Pokrovskii, *Pervoe stoletie*; Rezun, D.Ia. (ed.), *Letopis' sibirskikh gorodov*, Novosibirsk 1986; Okladnikov, A.P. (ed.), *Sibirskie letopisi*. Pt.1: *Gruppa Esipovskoi letopisi*, Moscow 1987

[140] E.g. the report of Iakov Turchaninov on his mission to Barguzinsk and beyond: 77-80

organisation and institutionalisation.[141] Some sources are in early twentieth-century publications and in the detailed descriptions by Ogloblin; and of course, decrees published in *Pol'noe sobranie zakonov Rossiiskoi imperii.*[142] Rezun's chapter on the Tukhachevskii campaign, which I have used in the absence of a publication of the materials is found in a book that investigates the early development of the town of Achinsk, drawing extensively on archival materials cited in considerable detail. Compared to the well-observed detail in the descriptive part, the conclusion and interpretation are unassuming and the author often expresses that he was puzzled about contradictory evidence.[143] To establish the inclusion of peasants, traders and migrants in cossack service, I have used an investigation in 1720 into bribery in recruitment.[144] To investigate the years after the Time of Troubles and the period of voevoda Kurakin, I have used publications of diplomatic materials and the materials collected by Müller at RGADA.[145]

For the material life of cossacks I have drawn on the edited "description" by a German officer[146], on the map of Irkutsk in the Remezov atlas (1701)[147], and on the aforementioned publications. Most source materials, decrees, reports and receipts that helped to describe the practices related to salary are found in the archives.

This database was constructed in MS Access as a general research tool underpinning the thesis; it includes 1,668 entries on cossacks mentioned in the sources and in literature and contains information about name; rank; function; careers; kinship and clientage links; length of service; and other observations on their role in society; former rank; locality; date of record; a special lable allowing to trace connections; literacy; and hyperlinks to relevant notes from sources. The Access

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[141] Pokrovskii, *Pervoe stoletie*, no.26, 88; Pokrovskii, *Tobolskii arkhiereiskii*, kniga v

[142] Golovachev, P.M., (ed.), *Pervoe stoletie Irkutska*, St. Petersburg 1902, 104; *RIB* vol.35, 143-4; vol.18, 8; Vasil'ev, *Zabaikal'skie*, vol.I prilozh. 25; see also the recent re-edition of Müller's *Istoriia Sibiri*; PSZ vol.IV no.1822, 116.

[143] Rezun, D. Ia., "Pokhod Ia.O. Tukhachevskogo 1641 g. i osnovanie Achinskogo ostroga", in: idem, *Russkie v Srednem Prichulyme XVII-XVIII vv.*, Novosibirsk 1984, 42-83

[144] RGADA f.214 kn.1619, passim

[145] *Russko-mongol'skie otnosheniia. 1607-1636*, Moscow 1959, no.22, ll.14-5; RGADA f.199 Portfeli G.F. Millera no.478 I l.66 (petition); *Russko-mongol'skie*, no.22, ll.3-4; Demidova, N.F. (ed.), *Russko-kitaiskie otnosheniia v XVII v.* [hereafter: *RKO*], vol.1: 1608-1683, Moscow 1969, 72-78, 108, 109, 115

[146] Alekseev, *Beschreibung*; Idem, *Sibir' v izvestiiach*

[147] "Caert des Lands en Stadt Yrkutskoy met de zee Baykal – Chertezh zemli Irkutskago goroda", in: *Chertezhnaia kniga Sibiri, sostavlennaia Tobol'skim synom boiarskim Semenom Remezovym v 1701 godu*, faksimil'noe izdanie, Moscow 2003, 20 – list ÿi

database has additional advantages over other forms of organising source data: It allows the tracing of connections between cossacks according to terms occurring in one label by excluding all entries that do not contain the term or combination of signs; resulting hints can be checked immediately against the source context through the hyperlink. For similar reasons, calculating proportions of literate men among different ranks, localities and years has also become easier. Where names were garbled, incomplete, or there was more than one person of the same name, comparison of entries often helped to establish the identity of the person.[148]

In chapter III, apart from the materials on the sovereign's affair included in chapter V, I have used published sources and the 1649 *Ulozhenie*.[149] Processes of institutionalisation are traceable in these publications, in the copybook of the archbishopric, in published annals, and in archival materials such as reports and receipts for salary.

Interregional relations and influences in empire are documented in petitions found in the archives, in the 1649 *Ulozhenie* and in a recent synopsis of the Russian Orthodox bible, in the materials published in Müller's *Istoriia*, the description by the member of the Polish *szlachta*, Nemojewski as desribed by Floria, and in the aforementioned archives and source publications.[150]

Sources on bribery and generalised exchange are in investigations and decrees in the archives and in 1649 *Ulozhenie*, in aforementioned publications and in Tatishchev's published works.[151] From a file on a 1720 investigation on bribery in recruitment in Selenginsk found in the Siberian chancellery's records I have also constructed a similar database with slightly different labels. Its entries have also been included in the first database, but its main upshot – evidence of bribery as a common phenomenon that affected the relations between voevoda and cossacks in various ways, such as increasing dependency, but which also provides evidence of local

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[148] It is intended that the database will be published after further research to fill certain gaps in the data.

[149] Hellie, Richard (ed.), *The Muscovite Law Code (Ulozhenie) of 1649*, Irvine/CA 1988, pt.I., ch. IX, art. 1; ch. X, art. 1, 2, 24, 147, 149, 150; *DAI* vol.4 (1851), 104-5, 89-90; *DAI* vol.4 no.37, 91-2

[150] RGADA f.1121 op.1 no.422 ll.80, 88, 112-114 (petitions); Hellie, *Ulozhenie*, 17; *Simfoniia ili slovar'-ukazatel' k Sviashchennomu Pisaniiu*, (red.) mitropolita ... Pitirima, 3 vols., Moscow 1988-2000, vol.II, 864-5; Müller, *Istoriia Sibiri* vol.I, 201, 206-7; Floria, B.N., "S. Nemoevskii o russkom gosudarstve i obshchestve XVI – nachala XVII vv.", *Russia Mediaevalis* vol. IX,1 (1997), 105-14

[151] Tatishchev, V.N., *Izbrannye proizvedeniia*, Leningrad 1979, 143

influence – could not be included in this thesis. It forms an essential part in a planned wider investigation of the Petrine reforms in Siberia.

This study answers recent, justified criticism of studies of the sovereign's word and affair that concentrate exclusively on rebellions, since they tend to eschew social relations in more peaceful times.[152] However, in Siberia rebellions were a frequent experience. The approach chosen in this study re-embeds participants in their social networks and institutional culture to understand the significance of their actions not only against the background of general assumptions about the relative socio-economic position of groups or estates, but on that of their everyday experience and the options available to them in the institutional culture in which they lived. Institutional analysis attempts to uncover the significance of institutions in political and social interactions. Institutions would not be viable if they were only efficient on a higher level of historical abstraction, guaranteeing that the empire remained intact. Their pragmatic efficiency in everyday situations gained acceptance or lost it, and we can study this world of interaction only to a modest degree on the level of events considered important by historians of the Siberian cossacks – such as the large-scale, spectacular rebellions –, but need clarification also on the level of seemingly insignificant day-to-day local administration, litigation, and other forms of social interaction. In order to understand the impact of a petition, for example, it is necessary to know the personal background of the signatories, which reveals more fully only in the petty local documentation of their daily existence. In Moscow, at the Siberian chancellery, despite the great pains taken at collecting materials, events of a rebellion could only be partially reconstructed. Investigators were not necessarily interested in the reasons for a rebellion, and their investigations stopped at the point when it broke down. Information was more aggregated when it reached Moscow, and therefore lost some detail. Less "relevant" information from everyday chancellery business was left behind in the local archives, where it sometimes survived. The same happened to many records of business transactions, which appeared in abbreviated form only in the customs protocols, and to minor, but very revealing investigations. Documents of election, *kabaly*, petty law-suits among cossacks, the

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[152] Lukin, *Predstavleniia*, 4-5

minutiae of the larger investigations and the payment of salary to individual cossacks, the instructions for *prikazchiki* and investigators who received them from the local voevoda, the lists of *godovalshchiki* who evaded their duty by paying money to substitutes or exchanging appointments are all found among the documents of the local voevoda's office, allowing some insight into the lives of the protagonists of later – or earlier – rebellions. This information is not available for every person due to the incompleteness of the archives and some materials lost by decay, but most of the cossacks that took part in the rebellions have left some other traces. Historians have tended to leave out material that seemed unrelated at first sight to the "great" rebellions and events, and which was more difficult to categorise. Computer-based evaluation of the material allows more effective processing of personal data, and the reconstruction of links between participants that were ostensibly unrelated. Using the computerised database, I have re-contextualised and linked the information from the Irkutsk archive. It contains a welter of sources of a primarily local nature that have, if at all, only been used in a statistical way in a narrow social historical approach, the results of which – except for a few brief articles – are unavailable in most libraries, in particular outside Russia.[153]

The Selenga rebellion has been chosen for this study since previous researchers have covered it inadequately, and the archive of the Irkutsk voevoda's office is the most extensive and complete on the Siberian steppe frontier. It contains the wealth of local detail needed to establish the aforementioned connections between individual cossacks and their biographies. The only other extensive local Siberian archive, that of Iakutsk, is much more monotonous; as chapter I shows, this is possibly so because of the different social and economic structures in the north, and because of its distance from the southern steppe frontier and from the Chinese and the Central Asian trade.[154] However, the 791 files of the Irkutsk archive, each containing up to 250 folios perused for this study concentrate on the period from the end of the 1680s to the early 1700s, providing much of the detailed information needed for the kind of

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[153] Leont'eva, *Sluzhilye*; idem, "Khoziaistvennye zaniatiia sluzhilykh liudei vostochnoi Sibiri v XVII-pervoi chetverti XVIII v.", in: *Agrarnyi stroi v feodal'noi Rossii. XV-nachalo XVIII v.*, Moscow 1986; Mashanova, L.V., "Promyslo-torgovaia deiatel'nost' russkogo naseleniia Zabaikal'ia", *Istoriia SSSR* (1983) no.2, 142-9. Aleksandrov and Pokrovskii made very fleeting use of the Irkutsk archive, keeping exclusively to the main investigation of the rebellion: *Vlast'*, 382-3

[154] See 94

investigation that I have undertaken. The fact that Irkutsk was a quickly growing town at this time may have contributed to the wealth of documentation preserved. On the other hand, archives in the wooden towns and fortresses often burned, and many files still perished or were stolen from local archives in modern times, as late as during the confusion of the 1990s. Even the Irkutsk archive suffers from evident losses – thus, much of the regular statistical data often available for Russian towns are lost: the books of account (*dokhodnye* and *raskhodnye knigi*) as well as many recruitment lists. It is regrettable that during the revolution of 1917, the archive of the Selenginsk Trinity monastery was destroyed by flooding when it was piled in a salt store on the shore of lake Baikal. Archives in RGADA fond 281 (*Gramoty kollegii ekonomiki*) stemming from other monasteries of the region around lake Baikal now also contain insufficient material on the period. Unfortunately, little has survived on Irkutsk and its district and, respectively, *prisud*, in the *razriad* town, at Eniseisk, although some files once were kept there, too.[155] The archive in Tobol'sk also contains no documents on Irkutsk, and it was inaccessible during my research. For documents denied to me from RGADA, *Irkutskaia prikaznaia izba*, I have relied on the typewritten description of documents available in the reading-room. Records from the Siberian chancellery provided further materials on rebellions, bribery and investigations, although earlier researchers have already read them. Despite the substantial gaps in the primary sources, there is rich material available which does enable new conclusions to be drawn about the nature of Muscovite rule in Siberia.

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[155] Elert, A.Ch., *Ekspeditsionnye materialy G.F. Millera kak istochnik po istorii Sibiri*, Novosibirsk 1990

Chapter I The Personenverband

During the conquest of Siberia and the subsequent phase of consolidation, which together consumed most of the seventeenth century, cossacks were the most numerous group of its new Russian inhabitants. Since the usual social structure of European Russia, consisting of nobles and serfs on their estates, did not exist and was not likely to flourish beyond the Urals, the role of cossacks in local politics was paramount. Until very late in the seventeenth century, they supplied the absolute majority of the Russian – or Orthodox – population of Siberia, and in most towns, albeit with the significant exclusion of Tobol'sk and Eniseisk, they overshadowed the members of the *posad* not only in numbers, but also in economic resources. Nevertheless, until very recently, for various reasons, historians have neglected the internal organisation of cossacks in both Russia and Siberia.[156] Despite their preponderant position in Siberia, cossacks have long been neglected by serious studies, while both romantic and despicable images have dominated the imagination. For the historians of the state-historical school, the numerical preponderance of

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[156] Following an ecological expalantion for the cossack lifestyle, the most recent account by Brian Boeck, *Shifting Boundaries on the Don Steppe Frontier*, unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Harvard University 2002, is subtle and illuminating on collaboration between nomads and cossacks, on the fluid equilibrium on the steppe frontier between raiding, peace-making, trading and ransoming, and on the mechanisms that regulated interactions between the Don Host and the Azovites. A spirited advocate of the notion of cossack democracy, he places the "special deal" between the host and Moscow at the centre of their relations, while explaining their utility to Moscow by local knowledge and the often-stated cost-efficiency. Interrelations between the military components of their institutions and organisation, the requirements of the steppe environment, and their cost-efficiency, however, are treated superficially, while cossack attitudes toward leadership are treated in a one-sided manner. Stökl, *Entstehung*, writing at length on the relations between Tatar and East-slavic cossacks, and giving some detail on extraordinary cossack leaders, especially those of a noble background, while noting that these men were deeply influenced by the frontier, fails to probe the power of the group as a defining factor of social structure and value. Longworth, while writing extensively about cossack identity, liberties and their warlike nature deals superficially with structure (see 17). In his encyclopaedic book on the Don cossacks, Mininkov, *Donskoe*, strives to reconceptualise the relations between the 'Don Host and Moscow along the lines of European vassalage, a term unknown to the area and period; in the absence of written contracts or oaths, his account is based on inference drawn from patterns of service and reward. Plokhy, *Religion*, offers a new and interesting view of the Khmel'nytsky rebellion as a religious uprising that united various sectors of Ruthenian society against Catholic Poland, although he concedes that the emphasis on securing of corporate privileges – itself a difference to cossacks related to Muscovy – often trumped confessional concerns, and gives a clear impression of cossack ranks, but all too often he refers to "the Cossacks" as if they were an undifferentiated mass without internal organisation, especially in a period when the common people "all turned Cossack": see Boeck, "Review", 736-8. Nikitin, *Sluzhilye*, who discusses cossack "self-administration" at some length, fails to explain why it took hold in Siberia, except for some general reference to the "tradition" of the cossacks of Ermak. Nikitin, Aleksandrov, *Vlast'*, and Pokrovskii, *Tomsk* can hardly be overestimated as reference works on Siberian cossacks although they adhere to the estate-representative theory overrating cossack devotion to their rights and privileges.

cossacks in the Russian population was nonetheless not significant, since they considered the state and its orders as the moving force in the conquest and colonisation. Inasmuch as cossacks were accepted as the primary agents of state power in Siberia, it was their heroic exploits to overestimate which these historians gave prominence; otherwise they were considered mere executors of official orders. The whole conquest of Siberia was seen as an "achievement of Russian weapons". Accordingly, it was the voevodas and other officials they studied, and not the cossacks.[157] This interpretation was criticised by the Siberian regionalists in the nineteenth century, who turned attention to the "free" colonisation, undertaken by merchants and trappers; yet though they ascribed to these categories of the Russian population the main role in the conquest and colonisation, they could not prove this claim in the archives. Concerning the administration, they straddled the interpretations of their opponents.[158] Already during the pre-revolutionary period Ogloblin published an innovative study of town rebellions as a spin-off of his archival studies for an inventory of the Siberian chancellery, but for a long time he remained the exception.[159]

Soviet historians tried to prove that Siberia was won for Russia not exclusively by the military and government. Still, musketeers were considered a reactionary force during the 1930s, and musketeers and cossacks were largely indistinguishable in Siberia. In Siberia, as elsewhere in the Soviet Union, historians were most attentive to the peasants' contribution to the colonisation. They could not overlook the important role of cossacks in agriculture during and after the conquest, but this did not become the subject of major studies.[160] It was only in the 1970s that Buganov

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[157] Fisher, I.E., *Sibirskaia istoriia*, St. Petersburg, 1774; Gazenvinkel', K.B., *Knigi razriadnye v ofitsial'nykh ikh spiskakh*, Kazan' 1892, 54-5

[158] Iadrintsev, N., *Sibir' kak koloniia*, St. Petersburg 1882; Golovachev, P., "Blizhaishie zadachi istoricheskogo izucheniia Sibiri", *ZhMNP* (1902) no.9, 49-68; Butsinskii, P.N., *Zaselenie Sibiri i byt pervykh eia nasel'nikov*, Khar'kov 1889

[159] Ogloblin, N.N., *Krasnoiarskii bunt 1695-1698 godov*, Tomsk 1902; idem, "Iakutskii rozysk o rosni bojarskikh detei i kazakov", *Russkaia starina*, St. Petersburg (1897) kn.8, 375-92; idem, "Tomskii bunt 1637-1638 godov", *Istoricheskii vestnik* vol.LXXXV, Moscow 1901, 229-50; idem, "K istorii Tomskogo bunta 1648 g.", *ChIOIDR* vol.3, Moscow 1903, 1-30; idem, "Zagovor Tomskoi 'litvy' v 1634 g.", *Chteniia v istoricheskom obshchestve Nestora letopisca*, kn.8, Kiev 1894, 116-27; idem, "Bunt i pobeg na Amur vorovskogo polka M. Sorokina", *Russkaia starina* (1896) no.1, 205-21

[160] Ustiugov, N.V., "Osnovnye cherty russkoi kolonizatsii Iuzhnogo Zaural'ia v XVIII v.", *Voprosy istorii Sibiri i Dal'nego Vostoka*, Novosibirsk 1961, 67-8; Mirzoev, V.G., *Prisoedinenie i osvoenie Sibiri v istoricheskoi literature XVII v.*, Moscow 1960, 60-1

and Golikova refuted the hypothesis of the reactionary character of the musketeers and their rebellions during the seventeenth and eighteenth century in Russia generally. However, they stressed the closeness of the cossacks and musketeers to the "masses".[161] At about the same time, the specialist on trappers, Pavlov, still considered it necessary to alert historians to Bakhrushin's erroneous statement that "it was not the servitors who won Iakutia, ... but the hordes of Russian trappers."[162] During the 1970s and 1980s, a number of local studies found that the cossacks deserved the credit not only for conquering Siberia, but also for their involvement in agriculture, trade, and crafts – and at times and in some regions, particularly close to the steppe, they were the only people carrying out such activities.[163] It was only during the 1980s that historians again studied town rebellions, and found that their social basis was mostly cossack.[164]

Considering this longstanding ideological blindness, it is unsurprising that explanations for the emergence and development of the specific forms of organisation characteristic for cossacks and for the extent and nature of their participation in local politics have been few and contradictory. A recent overview on Russian history put the state of research simply: "The [cossacks] practiced a mixture of primitive democracy and ruthless authoritarianism".[165] Representative as this statement is for the current state of studies on cossack institutions, it provides no explanation for the apparent tension between these terms.

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[161] Buganov, V.I., *Moskovskoe vosstanie kontsa XVII v.*, Moscow 1969; Golikova, N.B., *Astrakhanskoe vostanie 1705-1706 gg.*, Moscow 1975; Golikova, N.B., *Ocherki po istorii gorodov Rossii*, Moscow 1982

[162] Pavlov, P.N., "Otsenka promyslovoi kolonizatsii Sibiri XVII v. v sovetskoi istoricheskoi literature", *Doklady 1-i mezhvuzovskoi nauchnoi konferentsii po istoriografii Sibiri*, Kemerovo 1970

[163] Leont'eva, G.A., *Sluzhilye liudi vostochnoi Sibiri*, diss...kand., Moscow 1972; Nikitin, N.I., "Voennosluzhilye liudi i osvoenie Sibiri v XVII veke", *Istoriia SSSR* (1980), no.2, 161-173; Liutsidarskaia, "K voprosu o roli sluzhilogo naseleniia v razvitii goroda Tomska", in: *Ocherki sotsial'no-ekonomicheskoi i kul'turnoi zhizni Sibiri*, pt.2, Novosibirsk 1972, 5-14; Liutsidarskaia, A.A., "K voprosu o formirovanii torgovo-promyshlennogo naseleniia Tomska", in: *Goroda Sibiri*, Novosibirsk 1974, 67-74; Kurilov, V.N., "Uchastie sluzhilykh liudei v stanovlenii g. Tiumeni kak torgovo-promyshlennogo tsentra v XVII v"., in: *Goroda Sibiri*, 80-8; Nikitin, N.I., *Sluzhilye liudi v Zapadnoi Sibiri XVII v.*, Novosibirsk 1988

[164] Kurilov, V.N., "Volneniia v Tiumeni v 1654 g.", *Izvestiia SOAN SSSR. Seriia obshchestv. nauk* (1973) vyp.3 no.11, 99-104; Chistiakova, E.V., *Gorodskie vosstaniia v Rossii v pervoi polovine XVII v.: (30-40g.)*, Voronezh 1975; Kamenetskii, I.P., "Volneniia sluzhilykh liudei v Kuznetskom ostroge", in: *Sibirskie goroda XVII-nachala XX v.*, Novosibirsk 1981

[165] Hosking, *Russians*, 115; Skorik, *Kazachii Don*, vol.1, 140-4

Scholars have tried several approaches to explain the erratic twists and turns of the relations between cossacks and voevodas, unearthing problems that are even more difficult to trace. Early attempts at writing a history of Siberia by members of the State Historical School placed all power with the voevoda and the state, and since attempts at defining the role of the cossacks still leave room for doubt, these approaches were revived more than once.[166] Shunkov, though conceding the existence of elected local bodies in the European part of Russia, went so far as to argue that these were in a "rudimentary state" in Siberia, since there were no large feudal landowners there. Therefore, Shunkov concluded, all power was put in the hands of the voevoda.[167] Even Peter I was astonished as he was reminded by Siberians that the bodies of local governance in European Russia, the *zemskaia izba* and *guba* did not function in Siberia. Although this was due to the virtual absence of the *posad* in most towns, the cossacks did not establish a similar body.[168] Siberia, then, posed an extra challenge. Given the dearth of relevant studies up to the 1980s, several eminent scholars have nevertheless tried to make sense of the 1695-1698 rebellion in Krasnoiarsk, which established the local authority of elected "judges" (*sud'i*), which may seem to indicate similarity with conditions west of the Urals. But Krasnoiarian cossacks changed their *sud'i* much too often; yet the significance of such detail has not been grasped.

While Ogloblin believed the overthrow of the voevoda was caused by his corruption, Bakhrushin, though still concentrating on the voevoda's all-embracing powers and explaining the revolt as a reaction to the voevoda's abuses, tried to interpret the change from obedience to rebellion in terms of socio-economic changes.[169] As he pointed out, in the first decades after the foundation of Krasnoiarsk, cossacks and voevodas were close allies because of their common interest in subduing the natives. Yet when the nomad Dzhungars became ever more powerful in the last decades of the seventeenth century, most or all of the natives were already subjugated, and forcing new natives to pay *iasak* became more difficult.

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[166] Müller, *Istoriia*, vol.1, 249-50, 273-7 and passim; Dmytryshyn, *Apparatus*, 27; Vershinin, *Voevodskoe*, 144-6

[167] *Istoriia Sibiri*, red. V.I. Shunkov, Leningrad 1968, vol.2, 125

[168] Akishin, *Politseiskoe*, 74-110

[169] Aleksandrov *Vlast'*, 291; Ogloblin, "Krasnoiarskii bunt", 25-70; Bakhrushin, "Ocherki po istorii Krasnoiarskogo uezda v XVII v.", in: idem, *Trudy* vol.IV, Moscow 1959, 7-214, here: 170-92

In this period, the voevodas ceased to organise campaigns, and acted as mere administrators interested only in their own enrichment. Under such conditions, the cossacks of Krasnoiarsk rebelled against the administration.[170] However, as Aleksandrov and Pokrovskii point out, campaigns were organised even after the rebellion; moreover, they were very successful.[171] This observation is also in line with their broader point, that throughout the seventeenth century, there was a constant form of organisation among cossacks. Rather than long-term socio-economic change, therefore, it is necessary to take a close look at the context of these cossack groups, to determine their conditions of success.

Pokrovskii and Aleksandrov deserve credit for synthesising the many scattered facts on rebellions and the occasionally extensive rule of cossack circles and elected *sud'i* or voevodas in a stimulating way. They sought to integrate them in a general thesis concerning the "estate-representative monarchy", a construction dated variously to the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, involving the so-called "assembly of the land" as well as locally elected officials.[172] Describing cossack groups as estates, however, is questionable because of their very instability. They had neither codified sets of rules established, nor schedules for regular meetings, and they defended their rights and privileges in an unpredictable way. Sometimes they fought voevodas; sometimes they collaborated with them. Moreover, cossack circles were explicitly banned in Siberia, although with little effect. Thus it is straightforward for Vershinin, one of their students, to conclude that there were no cossack estates. He also claims that cossacks could not have conquered and administered such a vast territory on their own without noble guidance. Fighting each other, as they occasionally did, they would have endangered the whole enterprise of the fur trade in Siberia. Thus taking up the thread of the state-historical school, according to Vershinin, the voevodas were the true, far-sighted entrepreneurs deserving praise for having conquered and developed Moscow's north Asian possessions.[173]

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[170] Bakhrushin, "Krasnoiarsk", 180, 187, 188
[171] Aleksandrov, *Vlast'*, 292
[172] Ibid., 1-10, 351-6, and passim
[173] Vershinin, *Voevodskoe*, 138-147

However, Vershinin could not dissolve doubts concerning the ability of noble voevodas to live up to their supposed role as ideal bureaucrats acting according to rules – or as unbiased and unselfish administrators. Although cossack groups were unreliable to a certain degree, they still provided an irreplaceable counterweight to voevodas' aspirations. Petitions were indeed the only legal way in which cossacks could challenge the voevoda. To negotiate their claims, it was necessary to adapt the institutional culture of the centre to their needs. This adaptation is described in chapter III. Even this most important of the "rights" Aleksandrov and Pokrovskii ascribed to the cossack "estates" did not refer to a regular event, but prescribed a language of subordination and, as already mentioned, there was even a formal prohibition of assembly in the instructions voevodas received in Moscow. Thus, voevodas claimed that the circles in which legal petitions were deliberated were "traitorous".[174] To understand cossack institutions and forms of organisation, therefore, we need to find an explanation for their irregularity and contested nature. Nevertheless, the anthropology of Siberian cossacks in this period has to allow for their steadfast involvement in local politics and the high success level of their actions. Instead of applying institutional models found in western Europe, this thesis considers the very foundations of institutions, and thus opens the way to a new explanation of the fluid institutional forms found in Siberia.

The deadlock in the current state of studies on the Siberian cossacks derives from the problem that the form of the main agent of Siberian local politics is unclear. If there was a strict military hierarchy, as most historians believe, there should have been no limits to the power of the voevodas in distant and isolated Siberian towns and fortresses.[175] Yet Vershinin shows that in the last decade the approach centred on the military hierarchy has lost much of its explanatory value. While concentrating on the voevodas' contribution to Siberian administration, he avoids a description of the organisational structures of the immediate executors of their orders. After all, a central problem in the relations of the cossacks and the voevoda, and in the so-called self-administration of the cossacks remains unexplained; it can be demonstrated best once again by the Krasnoiarsk events in the late seventeenth century. While it has

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[174] Aleksandrov, *Vlast'*, 92-101
[175] Dmytryshyn, *Apparatus*, 27; Lantzeff, *Siberia*, 85-6

been admitted that the cossacks returned to the voevodas' rule in 1698, this is explained purely by Moscow's cunning in sending a popular voevoda to Krasnoiarsk. P.S. Musin-Pushkin had organised and led a successful campaign to the upper Enisei in 1692 when he first served as voevoda of Eniseisk.[176] To describe the cossacks merely as the deceived underestimates their control and powers of judgement. For over three years, Pokrovskii and Aleksandrov assert, Krasnoiarsk cossacks pursued a fixed programme of achieving self-administration and strove to expel the voevodas from Siberia once and for all, while circumspectly ruling their own affairs and those of the state. Yet within an approach centred on estates this careful yet eager pursuit of permanent self-rule is not consistent with their sudden acceptance of yet another voevoda, without noticing that he served as a Trojan horse, however popular he was.[177]

This impasse in studies of the Siberian cossacks is confirmed by other cases. If the Siberian cossacks could indeed permanently run the administration without the interference of a voevoda, how could they ever be forced to accept any of the bureaucratic orders that brought about the final downfall of the cossack estates, as Akishin's recent account of Peter's reforms and the Siberian administration suggests? His research is based on extensive archival studies, but also on an approach based on the supplantation of the estates-representative monarchy by bureaucratic rule advocated by Aleksandrov and Pokrovskii. Although Akishin provides masses of material showing that until very close to Peter's death, all reforms foundered on the conditions of service in Siberia, and particularly on campaign and guard services in the steppe, he cannot integrate this observation within a paradigm based on Western European models.[178] Akishin, too, is ultimately not content with the estates approach. Rather abruptly, he questions it then abandons it in his conclusion, stressing the "medieval" character of the cossack "democracy", in which collective authority intertwined with authoritarian and hierarchical influence. Within this symbiosis, the authoritarian authority gained the upper hand.[179]

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[176] Aleksandrov, *Vlast'*, 296, 299
[177] Ibid., 328
[178] Akishin, *Politseiskoe*, 8-21
[179] Ibid., 205. See also Vershinin, *Voevodskoe*, 143; Nikitin, "Traditsiiakh", 6

A close look at cossack structures, however, reveals that they were very well adapted to their surroundings, including the various borderlands they lived in, and the bureaucratic framework in which they operated. As the distinct forms of cossack authority in Siberia and other steppe frontiers suggest, these structures were also capable of change. To invoke "archaism", as Vershinin and Nikitin do, using the same approach, does not explain why authoritarian and collective authority were combined. Nor does it make clear why the collective authority finally gave in, or why Saint Petersburg in the eighteenth century could suddenly afford not to listen to cossacks' petitions. What is lacking most is an explanation of the way central government and local or group rule interacted. This chapter is designed to provide such a model.

Group Rule and the Leader

To explain the frequency of Siberian town rebellions in the seventeenth century as well as their virtual absence thereafter, different interpretations have been proposed. Yet while 'estates-representative monarchy' is an interpretation preoccupied with western European models which explain too little of what happened in Siberia, the time-consuming processes of bureaucratisation as a force which provoked protests misses the point as well. Historians were never slow to point out that from shortly after the conquest, the Siberian chancellery did its best to observe events in Siberia, at a very high cost. Nevertheless, the increase of administrative staff during the latter half of the seventeenth century was confined to the central chancelleries.[180] The paradox is that although historians have investigated local events, explanations for the abrupt end of town cossack rebellions at the end of the century have been sought on the outside – at the centre. To understand cossack groups from within, it is necessary first to analyse their interaction with their immediate environment. What is proposed here is an integrated view of the relations within cossack groups, of which relations with the voevoda or other leaders were an important part. Cooperation and independent action, submission and rebellion are not considered as mere unruliness or as opposed principles of political culture[181], but as

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[180] Demidova, N.F., *Sluzhilaia biurokratiia v Rossii XVII v.*, Moscow 1987, 35
[181] Lantzeff, *Siberia*, 80-7; Akishin, *Politseiskoe*, 205-6; Nikitin, "Traditsiiakh", 6

coherently expressing the needs of a social formation, the *Personenverband*. The cossack *Personenverband* was a specific form of primary group that was not formed by kin, but by unrelated members. Primary groups search for group-immanent ways to reduce their members' anxieties under threatening conditions. They are suited to this endeavour due to the face-to-face relations maintained within the group, and therefore well adapted to steppe frontier conditions. Unlike most primary groups, however, the *Personenverband* was not a kinship group, since members formed it of their own volition. Thus there was an inclusive phase up to the oath delivered to each other in the cossack circle; prospective members could not be forced to take the oath or agree to a set of rules governing group behaviour. The group was formed to provide mutual protection and enable economic pursuits in the steppe as well as to carry out raids and campaigns. This was all the more important since cossacks acted in an environment that mostly did not provide natural defences, and where the influence of the state and society was limited to frontier fortresses, apart from in the case of major rebellions. Therefore, the union was determined by common aims, and not by considerations of social status. Originally, men of any social, ethnic or religious background could become members of a cossack group, since within the *Personenverband*, all members were valued exclusively according to their abilities and their usefulness for the realisation of common goals. An exclusive period followed when the cossacks had taken the oath – from then on, all members were obliged by pain of death to observe the rules, and in particular adhere to the agreed aim. Union was temporary; the early – and many later – cossack groups dissolved after a hunting, fishing or campaign season, forming anew for the next season. Leaders were only elected after the cossacks had agreed a common aim. Their authority also derived – originally exclusively – from their perceived ability to fulfil the common group aim. They were ordinary members of the group rather than exalted commanders or nobles. The *Personenverband*, which could depose a leader if he did not pursue agreed group aims, tightly controlled him. Thus, there were no dual sources of authority within the original cossack band, since authority exclusively derived from the group's aims, and was closely supervised by the

Personenverband.[182] This term was first applied by Kumke to the cossack groups of the Lithuanian frontier and the steppe beyond Lithuanian and Polish influence.[183] Yet its explanatory value is not restricted to this territory, and can fruitfully be extended to other parts of the Eurasian steppe fringe. This chapter will also address changes and developments in the relations of leader and *Personenverband* in the partially dissimilar Siberian setting.

The obvious difference between such a group and an estate was the lack of permanence of the *Personenverband.* In this regard, it can be addressed as a set of institutional mechanisms that existed without a stable organisation. The individual organisation was discontinued, without personal or predetermined links, but to establish and maintain its organisational structure cossacks relied on institutional mechanisms. They existed within the cossack group, but also without it. Institutional mechanisms consist firstly of generally – or widely – accepted terms and gestures, and secondly forms of social representation and expectations of behaviour linked to these symbolic forms. Therefore, institutional mechanisms do not depend on an organisation. As far as the original *Personenverband* is concerned, as it occurred first in the Muscovite and Lithuanian steppe frontier, such mechanisms included deliberation over common aims, the preponderance of personal over social value, the election of the leader, and the close surveillance of the leader and his deposition if he did not respect the *Personenverband's* aims.[184] As this thesis will show, the assumption that the cossacks decided primarily according to a set of established professional rules is not confirmed by archival material, although I do not deny that there existed certain customs governing the ways in which a fortress was set up or a campaign was conducted.[185]

The Lithuanian and southern Russian cossacks lived and developed in an environment which in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries could not be brought completely under the control of either of the neighbouring states. The gradual decay

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[182] Nikitin, *Sluzhilye*, 48; Preobrazhenskii, *Ural*, 359

[183] Kumke, *Geführte*, 187-97, 480-92

[184] On institutional mechanisms, see 13-4, 24-5. In other areas, see Perrie, Maureen, "Outlawry (Vorovstvo) and Redemption through Service: Ermak and the Volga Cossacks", in: Kleimola, *Identity*, 530-42; Idem, "Cossack 'Tsareviches' in Seventeenth-Century Russia", *FzOG* vol.56 (2000), 243-256; Idem, *Pretenders and Popular Monarchism in Early Modern Russia. The False Tsars of the Time of Troubles*, Cambridge 1995

[185] Aleksandrov, *Vlast'*, 99-101

of the Mongol empire had left an abandoned area, the wild field (*dzikie pola* or *dikoe pol'e*) beyond the Dnepr. There, vagrant Tatars – the former Turkic allies of the Mongols – who no longer accepted the suzerainty of the Mongol Khan and were therefore called *qazaq* or "free men" – banded together in groups to make a living by raising cattle[186] and by assaults on the remaining settlements in the area. Captives were sold as slaves on the markets of the former Greek and Genoese, by then Ottoman, cities of the Black Sea shore. Devastation by these raids left whole regions void of population and permanent settlement. These developments of the fifteenth to sixteenth centuries meant that the open steppe, where these nomad groups operated, was too insecure for agriculture, while even in the adjacent wooded steppe peasants had to be guarded extensively.[187] Levels of violence among nomads as well as among cossacks living in the same steppe environment should therefore not be judged by modern standards. Frontiers in general elicit fiercer behaviour, but even in the "civilised" West early-modern levels of crime and violent behaviour were much higher than has long been thought.[188] Life on the steppe rim was reduced to the few remaining cities and their immediate neighbourhood. To their inhabitants, hunting and freebooting were the only ways to make a living, apart from the sparse yields the "ploughing" ecumene – as opposed to the nomad ecumene, which it confronted and cooperated with – derived from the soil, since full agriculture was largely impossible as long as unorganised nomad interference preponderated.[189]

Yet by the mid-sixteenth century the steppe frontier, where new settlers could find tax-exempt plots, also attracted migrants from adjacent states, and by the mid-sixteenth century the Slavic element predominated among cossacks. It was equally attractive that cossack groups remained ethnically and religiously open to virtually anybody, at least up to the 1630s. Some of the *qazaq* groups had already vowed allegiance to Muscovy or Lithuania, who employed them to defend border regions against nomad incursions. These groups became the first to intermingle with Slavic

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[186] Miyawaki, Junko, "The Chinggisid Principle in Russia", *RII* vol.19.1-4 (1992), 261-77, 276; cf. Stökl, *Entstehung*, 134

[187] For Siberia: Nikitin, *Sluzhilye*, 95

[188] Frank, Michael, *Dörfliche Gesellschaft und Kriminalität*, Paderborn 1995; Schlumbohm, Jürgen, "Gesetze, die nicht durchgesetzt werden – ein Strukturmerkmal des frühneuzeitlichen Staates?", *GG* vol.23 (1997), 647-63.

[189] Kumke, Geführte, 28-9, 111; Rostankowski, Peter, *Siedlungsentwicklung und Siedlungsformen in den Ländern der russischen Kosakenheere*, Berlin 1969, 7

peoples. While little is known about the structure of the *qazaq* groups, the picture is clearer when it comes to the resulting mixture of East Slav and Tatar institutions. Contrary to the myth of the cossacks who as free men were too proud to engage in agriculture, as Ivan III had already observed in 1502, it was the young men, the "*molodtsy*" who rode off to the steppe to get rich.[190] Those who returned with or without a fortune sought to settle down close to existing fortified settlements on their own plot of land.[191] Those heading for the steppe preferred a means of transportation even more familiar to the East Slavs, the boat. Like the *qazaq* groups however, they lived by the game they hunted and the furs they sold to Lithuanian and Muscovite merchants. There could be additional income from the booty of campaigns directed by the end of the sixteenth century against the coastal cities and Turkish trade galleys near the Black Sea. Although the rivers and their steep banks posed some obstacle to mounted nomads protecting the cossacks to a degree, the open steppe remained a dangerous place where they could easily fall victim to the nomads who were superior horsemen.

To cope with fear in the insecure open steppe environment, where no natural hiding places suitable for defence were available, and to make sure they attained their goals, cossacks developed a unique form of organisation, the primary cossack group or *Personenverband*. Its main organising principle was the utility of the individual to the group's purpose. The cossacks' main aims were formed by the conditions of survival in the steppe – defensive strength was needed to counter Tatar attacks. On the other hand, its economic efficiency guaranteed that the hunting season yielded enough surplus to feed them in winter and to pay off licenses or bribes to the *starosta* or voevoda of the frontier town they lived in. The usual size of a *Personenverband*, between about ten and sixty men, depended on this efficiency – the number of men needed to hunt or fish, to preserve the hunt for transportation, to defend the group or, according to the aim the group had set, to conduct a campaign. The law of marginal returns, the transparency of communication during

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[190] Nikitin, "Proizkhozhdenii", 168. Use of this term in Siberia: RGADA f.1121 op.2 no.107 l.6 (investigation).

[191] Kumke, *Geführte*, 134 n.101

deliberations, the restricted human capability to maintain face-to-face relations and sustain an *esprit de corps* limited its size.[192]

One of the greatest dangers was the disintegration of the group while it operated in the steppe. The cossacks strove to prevent this by a range of measures. Before heading for the open steppe, they held an assembly to determine their aims, decide potentially divisive questions such as the rules for sharing the prey or booty, and assign tasks to individual members. Once these aims and the composition of the group were agreed, each member was obliged to uphold them, and changes could only be made by common consent. After they had arrived at a decision, the group temporarily closed itself to outside influences for as long as it took to realise its plan. Whereas, as long as it was forming, it was open to people of any social, religious and ethnic background – nobles, peasants and Tatars, Orthodox, Roman Catholics and, up to the 1630s, even Jews[193] – a member would not even be allowed to leave once consensus was reached. This absolute and stubborn adherence to its aims made the *Personenverband* so effective in terms of economy and self-defence: Each member subordinated himself to the group's aims and decisions. In some regards, the *Personenverband* can be understood as a 'primary group': communities in which 'face-to-face' relations rule social behaviour and the distribution of roles and functions among their members. The individuality of members is of secondary relevance, since all aims are subordinated to the wellbeing of the community. According to Cooley the primary group is

> "...a certain fusion of individualities in a common whole, so that one's very self, for many purposes at least, is the common life and purpose of the group. Perhaps the simplest way of describing this wholeness is by saying it is a 'we'; it involves the sort of sympathy and mutual identification for which 'we' is the natural expression"[194]

Due to this fusion, formal social exaltation in the outside society and ethnic or confessional boundaries played no role in the original *Personenverband* – all

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[192] Ibid., 114

[193] Ibid., 109. Therefore the term cossack is written in lower case throughout this thesis. On religious tolerance, see: Richard, Jean, "Le Christianisme dans l'Asie centrale", *JAH* (1982) vol.16.2, 101-124. On the mixed composition of Siberian rebel *Personenverbände*, see Alcksandrov, *Vlast'*, 184.

[194] Cooley, Charles, *Social Organization*, New York 1909, cited acc. to George, Alexander, "Primary Groups, Organization and Military Performance", in: Little, Roger (ed.), *Handbook of Military Institutions*, Beverly Hills 1971, 293-318, here: 297

members were equal and had their functions assigned according to their utility to the group's purpose; only personal capabilities could contribute to a person's standing in the group.[195] This merger can be explained by the behaviour of small military units in extreme situations, which has been studied in particular by military sociologists. It has been shown that strength depends on the degree of danger on the battlefield. Search for group-immanent solutions to minimise fear was decisive for group identity and solidarity. The aim of these groups consisted in resisting disintegration and proving strength by taking a firm common stand. They would rather fight for someone – a 'buddy' – than against an abstract enemy.[196] This absorption in fighting fear led to an isolation that made cossack groups immune to outside influences – what could be the relevance of a faraway society and its power mechanisms to a small isolated group in the boundless steppe in face of a danger, be it nomads, a competing cossack group, or a natural obstacle?

One way in which the group ensured unity would be preserved was by resolute crackdowns on dissenters. It is the inability to compromise that best highlights the difference between the cossack 'constitution' and modern democracy. In the steppe environment, unity was crucial, and even violent suspension of lingering doubts about the validity of the consensus could be a suitable way of stabilising a state of harmony deemed necessary. In this respect, no frontier matches southern Rus': Prior to the late eighteenth century, no American Indian roamed the prairie as a mounted warrior, nor was there an ages old nomad society that could boast of having dropped western Europe like a cat a half-dead mouse. At the time the prairie was fought over, Indian nomads posed much less of a challenge than the Mongols, Tatars or Kalmyks to technically less advanced Muscovy or even Lithuania prior to the mid-seventeenth century. For the resulting insecurity in the population, in the east a certain degree of violence was frequently a necessary element in the process of deliberation. This 'constitution' proved so vigorous, that the *Personenverband* severely punished members who offended its decisions – sometimes even by death. Although the open steppe was largely free of normal structures of rule of any neighbouring power, it was hardly anarchic. It was rather the rule of the group everybody was subordinated

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[195] See illustration II: Ermak's cossacks received by Ivan the Terrible.
[196] George, *Primary*, 294, 297-9; Kumke, *Geführte*, 108-9

to was permanent, for only groups could survive in competition with other groups, and with the Tatars. As military sociologists acknowledge, the primary group has the highest level of combat strength of all military units.

The rule of the group was further enhanced by the election of the leader. Far from delegating its power to the leader, the cossack group sought a personality who by his very capabilities could embody the group's aims. This could mean a promise of rich prey or booty, or the fame of a successful cossack leader. Rather than ruling the group, the leader had a more representational function – he served to allow identification. Through the leader, the group identified with its aims. The Zaporozhian cossacks, according to the French engineer Guillaume le Vasseur de Beauplan and others, tended to believe it was only the group that mattered and had merit, while all leaders were equally negligible.[197] In Siberia, the sophisticated, long-lasting and successful Tomsk rebellion of 1648-1651, complaining about the malfeasance of the voevoda Osip Shcherbatyi chose for some time as its controversial figure-head the banned chamberlain of the metropolitan, Grigorii Podrez-Pleshcheev. Podrez openly denied God and owned an illegal tavern. A pimp, he had been reproached for his lifestyle and arrested for so serious an offence as instigation to murder only months before the rebellion started. Yet to the cossacks, he symbolised resistance to the voevoda. What is more, in view of the serious allegations against him, assignment to the position of *syn boiarskii* along with the highest allowance of twenty roubles straight out of prison in September 1647 leaves little room for doubts that he enjoyed albeit limited benefaction from his uncle, L.S. Pleshcheev, who was made head of the *zemskii prikaz* on 15 August 1647. Pleshcheev's career did not last long, as an enraged crowd quartered him on 3 June 1648.[198] The cossacks were ready to join Podrez-Pleshcheev in his struggle against voevoda Shcherbatyi, but only as long as he was useful to them. Patronage could thus be a vital resource in the struggle for power and a share in Siberian trade, since cossack groups were vulnerable during their journey to and from Moscow or Tobol'sk. On the other hand it was hard for the second voevoda and elected leader of the rebellion, Bunakov, to arrest Podrez-Pleshcheev even when ordered to by a

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[197] Ibid., 193-4, 197
[198] Pokrovskii, *Tomsk*, 45-6

decree from Moscow; his second attempt yielded better results only when the *Personenverband* was already divided and Bunakov avoided the cossack circle.[199]

In charge of their first delegation to Moscow they chose the successful leader, cossack trader and *syn boiarskii* Fedor Pushchin, irrespective of the bribes he had exacted from tax-paying natives. Rather than adding to an imaginary bad character, one peculiar move Pushchin made underlines that to the cossacks, the ideal leader was even more subject to the *Personenverband* conditions of equality and compliance. He went as far as to sue his own uncle in the cossack assembly, the circle, since his uncle "stays away from the troop, and does not pull with the troop" and demanded "he must be punished by the troop".[200] The role of Siberian cossack leaders in rebellions as described – potentially distorted – by their opponents was usually that of someone who induced the cossacks to undertake unlawful actions. Yet in subtler expressions, a great deal is said about the much more intricate nature of these relations – during the Tomsk rebellion of 1648-1649 former second voevoda Bunakov, who had been elected subsequently by the cossacks as their voevoda, as well as the *d'iak* Patrikeev, were called by the deposed voevoda Shcherbatyi "*potakovniki*" (indulgers, panderers).[201] In this emphasis on assistance, on gratification and yielding to the cossacks' aspirations the nature of the relationship between cossacks in the *Personenverband* and their leader is enunciated.

Siberian events reveal that the authorities expected the primary cossack group to exert absolute group rule. During investigation into the Transbaikalian rebellion of 1696-7, the former leader of the Selenginsk cossacks Anton Berezovskii tried to conceal his active role in the movement by maintaining that he had been forced by the cossacks to lead the campaign to Irkutsk "against my own wishes".[202] Even if this was a fraud, Berezovskii nevertheless tried to rationalise his actions by reference to an acknowledged or well-known institution; otherwise his argument would have been bizarre.[203] An eminent personality was not allowed to withhold his capabilities

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[199] Ibid., 303

[200] Müller, *Istoriia*, 312-4; cf. Chistiakova, E.V., "Tomskoe vosstanie 1648", in: *Russkoe naselenie Pomor'ia*, 72-93, here: 80

[201] Ogloblin, "K istorii", 6; Pokrovskii, *Tomsk*, 63, 70-1; Vershinin, *Voevodskoe*, 41

[202] Golovachev, P.M., (ed.), *Pervoe stoletie Irkutska*, St. Petersburg 1902, 104

[203] On the "sunken" cognitive costs in institutions: Offe, *Designing*, 25-6; Krasner, "Sovereignty", 81

due to the commitment of cossacks to their group, which demanded that they did everything in their power to achieve the common goal. Thus in cossacks' eyes rejecting leadership, once the leader was elected, meant committing an act of treason to the group.[204] In 1628 the elected *ataman* Ivan Kol'tsov tried to stop his Krasnoiarsk cossacks who were starved after their grain salary was not delivered in time, from robbing a caravan. But in doing so he exceeded his authority, and he was charged in the cossack circle and killed by his own men.[205] To gain the approval of the group and thereby achieve authority the leader had to comply with the group's aims and ideals to an even higher degree than ordinary members. It was only by embodying the group's aims that leaders of egalitarian groups could enhance their authority – they had no coercive means *sui generis* at their disposal. Thus egalitarian cossack groups cannot be characterised with the usual concepts of the sociology of rule and control.[206]

Due to this representational rather than ruling function, it follows that leaders were not elected before the group had agreed on its aims. Similarly, if on a partly different level of organisation, 295 cossacks from western Siberia headed for a campaign to build the fortress of Iakutsk on the river Lena in 1634. They elected their immediate group leaders – the *desiatniki* and *piatidesiatniki*, leaders of units of ten and fifty – only after a lengthy process of negotiation with the voevodas over salary and the general conditions of service had ended, and all preparations were complete. These cossacks had not even enough *group leaders* since none of the higher ranks of Tobol'sk cossacks were ready to set out for Iakutsk, several thousand miles away in wild and inhospitable north-eastern Siberia. Thus the motley band of cossacks, mostly only recently recruited, had to set up their group structure from scratch. Immediately after recruitment they showed extraordinary dexterity in confronting the voevodas, and in formulating and pursuing their aims. When challenged by the voevodas, they made it clear that their first aim was the survival of the group in its current form. In the course of protests, when several of the rebellious cossacks were caught and brought to the voevodas' office, their "comrades" among

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[204] Kumke, *Geführte*, 269 n.52
[205] Aleksandrov, *Vlast'*, 96
[206] Kumke, *Geführte*, 191; Hofstätter, Peter, *Gruppendynamik*, Hamburg 1971, 147

the huge crowd outside "volunteered to support them and did not allow them to be beaten with cudgels." Their actions incited the crowd to protest more fervently – a very frequent form of action.[207] Cossack groups were frequently described by the representative name of the leader, who might be of almost any rank including ordinary cossack, adding "...with comrades". Rather than subordinates to the leader, this term evinces the egalitarian communal mentality, repeated in Siberia from the time of Ermak, as well as on the southeastern European steppe rim.[208] In other cases, the term "with comrades" was exchanged for "with cossacks" – for example, when the Berezov voevoda in 1626 dined with ataman Ivan Babarykin's cossacks.[209] This inverse relation to the leader sets cossacks apart from the boyars of Novgorod with their political and economic dependants.[210]

This perception of leadership most clearly defines the difference between the Russian peasant or *posad mir* and the cossack *Personenverband*, forms of organisation that are often inaccurately equated.[211] The *mir*'s elected village elder was accountable for the taxes collected by the *mir*. He even had to pay any incurred losses himself. This directly derived from the subjugation of the *mir* to the grand prince caused by the Mongol invasion.[212] As peasants and town-dwellers increasingly fled to the steppe rim, they did not simply copy this *mir* or fall back upon its more primitive forms.[213] The village community could provide essential security and enjoyed a degree of independence in its internal affairs, but above all the fugitives fled from the oppression that was organised in the form of the *mir* and its accountability to the landowner.[214] It is telling that in some sources the *voisko* fashioned itself as the *mir*, while forms of organisation did not alter. The way in which voevoda B.S. Dvorianinov of Verkhotur'e was successfully challenged reveals

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[207] Pokrovskii, *Pervoe stoletie*, no.26, 88

[208] Kumke, *Geführte*, 220; Aleksandrov, *Vlast'*, 77; Stanislavskii, A.L., *Grazhdanskaia voina v Rossii XVII v.*, Moscow 1990, 9; *RIB* vol.35, 143-4; vol.18, 8; cf.: Usmanov, M.A., *Tatarskie istoricheskie istochniki*, Kazan' 1972, 94

[209] Pokrovskii, N.N. (ed.), *Tobolskii arkhiereiskii dom v XVII v.*, Novosibirsk 1994, kniga v, 230, ll.324 ob, 325

[210] Assuming a genetic relation with Novgorod's constitution: Bykadorov, I.S., *Istoriia kazachestva*, 1930, vol.I, 113-5. Vernadsky, George, *A Ilistory of Russia*, 54-5; idem, *The Mongols and Russia*, 346

[211] Vershinin, *Voevodskoe,* 143; Nikitin, "Traditsiiakh", 5, 7

[212] Hosking, *Russians*, 156

[213] Nikitin, "Proiskhozhdenii", 167-77

[214] Moon, *Peasantry*, 207

much about the relation of the *Personenverband* and the *mir*. The voevoda, who had covered the misdeeds of his predecessor and patron[215] fell prey to an intrigue from a quarter he did not expect – in June 1648, the fugitive peasant M. Kabakov, under torture, addressed the voevoda with the words "sovereign-tsar, have mercy", and Dvorianinov failed to correct him. Still, this affair was dormant until in October he was charged by the *pod'iachii s pripis'iu* I.I. Nedoveskov accompanied by the "young" *pod'iachii*s and a group of cossacks. By accepting Kabakov's invocation, the litigants claimed somewhat belatedly, Dvorianinov had dishonoured the tsar. The next day, a delegation consisting of cossacks, *posad* people and the elder of the peasants felt entitled to put the voevoda under arrest and disallow Dvorianinov all communications

> "while the *mir* come to a head (*pridumaet*) with Ignat'ii [Nedoveskov] and Fedor [Driagin, chief customs officer]"

As during so many other Siberian rebellions, this *mir* consisted of members of virtually every imaginable settled social group in Verkhotur'e and first made sure to formulate and sign litigation in the form of a petition. Only after constituting themselves as a *Personenverband* by this act[216], did they formally declare the "*otkaz*", connecting it inextricably with litigation – they could not allow themselves to be judged by Dvorianinov any more, since "[we] do not want to fall in disgrace".[217] This formal deposition of the voevoda was also uncharacteristic of the peasant *mir*.

The changing states of affairs of the *mir* were typical of this institution's instability yet viability in Siberian towns, where the frontier and frequent service in far-off places as well as the involvement of many cossacks in distant trade demanded a high degree of flexibility of institutions. The memory of the *mir* was available to all Russians who had made their way to the steppe or to Siberia, while the term could be useful in dealing with Moscow, as we will see later. Among Siberian cossacks, elected leaders were not accountable to the chancellery or the tsar in the same way as a village elder. They could distinguish themselves by successful campaigns or the

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[215] See 152-3

[216] This is not to say that the *mir* was everywhere equivalent to a *Personenverband*. In Siberia, the town cossacks dominated the mir.

[217] *Aleksandrov, Vlast'*, 265-7

amount of furs collected or by "leading new *iasak* people under the tsar's high hand". Yet though they might be asked for an explanation they were unlikely to pay the difference in tax yield on the sole evidence that fewer furs had been collected than the year before. This marks the divide between the frontier and central Russia, between taxes about which a prognosis could be made and those that could not: Any incurred losses in the – recorded – *iasak* treasure entrusted to cossacks during their trips to Moscow was deducted from their salary.[218]

On the other hand, even if rebels elected leaders to an official position, it was possible for a *syn boiarskii* or a *piatidesiatnik* to improve his service record by accepting the election without incurring the danger of being punished by the tsar. Apart from the direct protection the *Personenverband* could provide, cunning behaviour shows that the cossack primary group provided an environment in which playing both ends against the middle was a feasible alternative to blind obedience. Afonasii Beiton's career remained spotless despite his dubious meddling with the Transbaikalian cossacks in 1696. The former cossack Fedor Cherkasov had denounced his master, the Irkutsk head of musketeers and Moscow list *dvorianin* Afonasii Beiton for conspiring with the rebellious cossacks arriving from the other side of Lake Baikal. In his own words, Cherkasov had left the Ukrainian (*cherkaskie*) towns for Siberia after his father's death, where he served from 1685/1686 as a cossack in Tobol'sk, Dauria on the Amur and on the Selenga river just across Lake Baikal. While staying in Irkutsk, he said, he was fooled into signing a *dvorovoi zhiloi rabotnoi zapis'* in 1691/1692 after he was made drunk by Beiton who wanted Cherkasov to work for him in his tailor's business and by deception married the cossack in that same night to his servant. Cherkasov maintained he had never dared claim his rights in the following years, but after overhearing the conversation between Beiton and the cossacks, he believed he could count on the voevoda's support. Indeed, he made serious accusations against Beiton. According to Cherkasov, Beiton was approached by the Transbaikalian cossacks when they twice came to lay siege to Irkutsk in May or July 1696. They came with clear designs,

[218] Nikitin, *Sluzhilye*, 103

offering to make Beiton their representative ("*sedok*") in Irkutsk once he had swayed the Irkutsk cossacks to the side of the Transbaikalians:

> "You Afonasii will be *sedok* with us in Irkutsk and rule the local cossacks and the town and all the people."[219]

Quite unceremoniously, according to Cherkasov, the thirty cossacks "all of them as one" ordered Beiton to make sure the cannons on the palisades of the recently-strengthened fortress would not be loaded so they could not be fired at the Transbaikalians. In case this proved impossible, they had other plans – they needed Beiton's knowledge of the Amur area since, newly-recruited as they were, and without any orientation in the region, they still intended to leave the Selenga and promised to come and help get him out of Irkutsk. The cossacks took it for granted that he would join them; as they said "we will go to the Amur with you … and you will serve with us as you served earlier in Albazin." The socially equal position of the leader vis-à-vis the cossacks is also conveyed in the rites of submission and mutual obligation he performed upon election:

> "And he Afonasii, hearing their words told them 'I am pleased to serve with you [if; -] only you neither turn me over nor abandon me and I will live and die together with you."[220]

Thus, supposed rebels against the garrison's upper class elected and forced one of their known 'oppressors' to be their leader, believing with good reason that he would comply given only that the situation was in their favour.

As Siberian cossacks could oblige an outside cossack leader to enter service with their group they could also turn a voevoda assigned to his duty by the tsar into their own elected rebel leader against his own wishes. In the Krasnoiarsk rebellion of the 1690s as in many other cases the cossacks changed their leaders and elected judges (*sud'i*) frequently – this has rightly been interpreted as proof of the cossacks' control over their leaders.[221] Yet the very frequency of depositions and elections shows that it should not be mistaken for an example of modern inclusive democracy or estate rule – it was the exclusive group that ruled here.[222]

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[219] "*U nas*" in this context must refer to the Selenga, not the Irkutsk cossacks
[220] RGADA f.1121 op.2 no.164 ll.9-17 (investigation). Cf. Kumke, *Geführte*, 193
[221] Aleksandrov, *Vlast'*, 296
[222] Cf. Kumke, *Geführte*, 189-90

In a symbolic way, another incident shows the narrow boundaries constraining even a popular leader who was sent and legitimated by higher authorities. The *pis'mennyi golova* Stepan Lisovskii, son of a captured Polish nobleman, who was employed as a under-secretary in the voevoda's office and rose to the rank of *streletskii* head, was sent in 1698 by the Eniseisk voevoda to investigate the Krasnoiarians' deposition (*otkaz* of the third voevoda in a row. During his investigations, Lisovskii found out just how uncomfortable it could feel if one was popular with the cossacks. Since the Krasnoiarians present in Eniseisk at this stage did not confirm the claims of their petitioners about the voevoda's malfeasances, voevoda Durnovo was soon restored to his post by the *razriad* voevoda. Yet this was more than the Krasnoiarsk cossacks could bear, and, after consultations in the circle, they decided to send him back whence he came. Found asleep in his residence, voevoda Durnovo was taken to the bank of the Enisei, wearing only his caftan. While the racket was still continuing and cossacks tried to decide what to do next, Stepan Lisovskii took Fedor Chanchikov's and Daniil Startsov's *Personenverbände* aside and negotiated with them. Afterwards he approached Durnovo, who could not overhear these deliberations, to comfort him and told that the Krasnoiarians would not attempt to kill him, a fact Lisovskii claimed he knew "genuinely". Indeed, among the cossacks there were shouts that "Stepan Lisovskii was sent by the great sovereign", whereas Durnovo

> "came by himself...and they obey Stepan Lisovskii, and whatever Stepan Lisovskii orders, they will do."

At this point, Lisovskii attempted to leave on a boat half-loaded with stones moored at the riverbank, in which Durnovo, his people and those Krasnoiarians loyal to him had been put, but Chanchikov and others

> "seizing him by the sleeves, pulled him out of the boat", shouting "that they were not going to allow him to leave Krasnoiarsk for he must be their [leader][223] instead of the voevoda as before. ...[Lisovskii asked:] whether they wanted to lead him to town tied up?"

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[223] "*Chtoby emu u nikh byt*" – *u* indicates possession, albeit one that is not akin to Roman law, including obligations towards family and the possessed: cf. Nolte, Hans-H., „Eigentumsrecht im Moskauer Staat", in: *Staat und Gesellschaft im Mittelalter und Früher Neuzeit.*, Göttingen 1983; Weickhardt, George, "The Pre-Petrine Law of Property", *SR* 52 (1993), 663-79

He may have wondered whether making him their voevoda was really a favour since the next day there were rumours in town that it had been wrong not to kill Durnovo.[224] There was always the danger that a voevoda might succumb to group rule, but he might equally well be embraced by it.

The assertion of group rule may be surprising for a relatively large town. Krasnoiarsk was an advanced outpost deep in the steppe. Cossacks depended extraordinarily on steppe crafts and therefore the primary cossack group was an everyday experience for most, if not all of them. Similar conditions prevailed in the Transbaikal towns and fortresses in the Selenga valley opening to the steppe in the south. For fur hunting, hunters pulled together in *arteli*, groups of between two and nine people whose uninterrupted presence in the hunting grounds lasted between two and five weeks during the season from September to October. They hunted sable and squirrel, and in the steppe the marmot. Of the 273 declarations of furs worth 15,300 roubles made in the customs office at Irkutsk from 1692-1700, fifty-seven declarations worth 3,524 roubles were made by cossacks. It was the cossack bands who declared the richest haul. It is therefore no surprise that private fur hunters (*promyshlenniki*) often joined cossacks or vice versa – their basic organisational forms were by no means different on the group level, except for formal paperwork, oaths and privileges. Groups (*arteli*) consisting of five to eight people also maintained fisheries.[225] Yet in the steppe, service, hunting and other kinds of steppe craft were even more closely connected than in the forests. For there was always plenty of time to hunt while groups of sentries (*stanitsy, otezzhye karauly* or, in Poland-Lithuania, *lezhy*) rode through the steppe listening to sounds of hooves transmitted by the ground to find hostile nomad bands before they could assault town or hamlet. This was an especially salient feature in Krasnoiarsk, surrounded by steppe and nomadic tribes.[226] Double income, together with a salary, or at least increased security of income, to a high degree made for the attractiveness of the registered cossacks in Poland-Lithuania.[227] It was characteristic of these

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[224] Bakhrushin, *Krasnoiarsk*, 189

[225] Mashanova, "Promyslo-torgovaia ", 147. Staehr, Georg, *Ursprung, Geschichte und Bedeutung des russischen Artels*, 2 vols., Dorpat 1890-91

[226] Bakhrushin, *Krasnoiarsk*, 72-3

[227] Kumke, *Geführte*, 215

Personenverbände that they were only secondarily military associations[228] – what counted was the economic yield, which was however unattainable without the security provided by the close observance of the group's purpose by all members.

Cossacks also banded together to trade, and the *Personenverband* provided a ready form of ensuring the highest attainable levels of security. They enjoyed trade privileges exempting them up to a set, if over the course of the seventeenth century variable, amount, and often carried large numbers of furs and other merchandise. In 1699 two *desiatki* of Irkutsk cossacks returning from their one year's service in the steppe outpost of Tunkinsk, which was sealing off access through the mountains to Irkutsk, were assaulted by a superior Mongolian force. At least three of the rank-and-file cossacks lost their merchandise, clothes and furs, to the robbers.[229] When in 1698 the caravan of merchant Spiridon Liangusov left Nerchinsk for China, it was accompanied by one hundred cossack "guards"; the Siberian chancellery, which had just changed tax rules, was anything but pleased as it learned that all of them had been tax-exempted. Such large numbers of guards were no exception.[230] The *syn boiarskii* Grigorii Lonshakov carried his own furs worth 275 rubles when he and his cossacks brought the "sovereign's [fur-] treasure" to Moscow. These official trips were used for private trade.[231] Such groups of cossack traders protecting each other repeated a pattern well-known from early medieval merchants; it is one of the distinctive elements of Siberian cossackdom as compared to their counterparts elsewhere in Eastern Europe, since in Lithuania river trade was reserved to town merchants while the only commodity Don cossacks traded extensively was slaves.[232]

The emergence of caravan trade with China at Bejing organised by Russians provided the *Personenverband* with an opportunity to prove its utility unavailable to cossacks elsewhere. Yet this was already the result of a differentiation of the spheres of trade and diplomacy, which became necessary due to irreconcilable disagreements

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[228] Bakhrushin, *Krasnoiarsk*, 190

[229] RGADA f.1121 op.1 no.422 ll.79-81, 88, 112-114 (investigations)

[230] PSZ vol.IV no.1822, 116; RGADA f.1121 op.1 no.416 ll.68, 70 (decrees)

[231] Leont'eva, *Sluzhilye liudi*, 292-4, 303; RGADA f.214 kn.1228 ll.95, 95ob.; kn.583 ll.252-288, kn.618 ll.312-359 ob.

[232] The Polish diet prohibited marriage between cossacks and townspeople in 1638. From the end of the sixteenth century, Polish cossack policy was directed against the fluid limitations between the two categories. Trade was a monopoly of townspeople: Kumke, *Geführte*, 36-7; Astapenko, *Istoriia.* vol.1/2, 55. Personal communication with Brian Boeck.

on protocol between the tsar's court and the Manchu.[233] Before this, cossacks already took part in trade enterprises involving exchange with Chinese merchants at improvised staples in the eastern Siberian frontier area in the 1670s and 1680s. Cossacks of the frontier fortresses of Albazin, Nerchinsk and Selenginsk bought Chinese merchandise through the mediation of Tungus and Mongols.[234] Much earlier in Western Siberia, overland trade with Central Asia and further to China was reserved to Bukharan merchants, who enjoyed tax privileges. Although cossacks profited from this trade, which served to supply frontier fortresses, it also meant that their own opportunities for trade were restricted to internal traffic. To the cossacks, until the establishment of direct links with China, external trade was limited to missions to the Mongols, the official part of which was intertwined with the purpose of trade, as tradition had it on the silk road.[235] This form of trade had long been practised by cossacks, who from the first attempts to reach China early in the century had carried out ambassadorial duties of their own accord.

This combination of official and private functions, organised in the context of the *Personenverband*, had already in the final years of the Time of Troubles reached a state in which Moscow had reason to fear sedition in its Siberian possessions as yet precariously held.[236] Yet the incident also promoted a redefinition of relations between the tsar and the Siberian cossacks. The first Russian mission to China in 1617 – about half a century earlier than the first officially authorised – was initiated locally, as was disapprovingly noted in the Moscow sources, by "Siberian people". The Petlin mission was sent by voevoda Ivan Semenovich Kurakin, who so far had enjoyed the benefits of a rapid and interesting career – in 1597 he attended the reception of the German emperor's ambassador, in 1601 he was *stol'nik*, in 1606 voevoda in Tula. I.S. Kurakin is a controversial figure. He was deeply involved in politics during the interregnum, as a member of the *boyar duma* he fought on the side of the pretender and the Polish prince Władysław "against the Russians", or rather for a restricted monarchy on the Polish model, and petitioned the Polish King

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[233] Mancall, *Russia and China*, 43-4, 49-51, 56, 82-94, 106, 141
[234] Leont'eva, *Sluzhilye*, 304
[235] Penrose, "Influences", 361-92
[236] Bakhrushin, S.V., "Voevody Tobol'skogo razriada v XVII v.", in: idem, *Trudy*, vol.3.1, Moscow 1955, 265-273, here: 262

Sigismund for a land grant in 1611[237]; later he benefited from an amnesty. As Klaus Zernack has observed, the boyars who proposed Władysław's election as tsar were from the circle around the Romanovs, rendering it unlikely that he was banned under Mikhail Romanov for his role in the Time of Troubles.[238] In 1614, after Mikhail's accession to the throne, he was promoted to the highest boyar rank.[239] The prevailing opinion is that his assignment to Tobol'sk was an "honourable" banishment[240], although nobody has explained what that might mean. Yet this makes clear neither why he stayed in Moscow after Mikhail's accession, nor why he was made a boyar. Demidova, however, and Baron noted Kurakin's intimate knowledge of English trade interests in the East – and his valuable services to the new dynasty. He probably first met Merrick, the company's Moscow representative, in 1606, when the company secured the renewal of its privilege from tsar Vasilii Shuiskii, whom Kurakin had helped to gain the throne. If he did not learn about English ambitions in Northern Russia and Siberia on this occasion, he certainly did so in 1614, when he engaged with Merrick in talks concerning peace negotiations with Sweden, undertaken simultaneously with Merrick's bid for permission to explore the Ob'.[241] It is unlikely that he was subsequently sent to Tobol'sk by accident. From 24th January 1616 – 21st May 1620 he was posted there as voevoda,[242] but thereafter his career faltered. If he was in trouble and eager to resume his career, and therefore remained in Moscow, why then should he give such ample pretexts for the disfavour he finally suffered? Even the next voevoda and the newly-installed archbishop of Tobol'sk, Kipriian, were confronted with tensions resulting from the tsar's disapproval of the

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[237] Voskoboinikova, N.P., *Opisanie drevneishikh dokumentov arkhivov moskovskikh prikazov XVI – nachala XVII vv.*, Moscow 1994, 249. Sukhotin, L.M., *Zemel'nye pozhalovaniia v Moskovskom gosudarstve pri tsare Vladislave*, Moscow 1911, 50-53

[238] Zernack, Klaus, *Polen und Rußland*, Berlin 1994, 193

[239] According to uncorroborated opinion, I.S. Kurakin became boyar in 1605: Likhachev, N.P., *Razriadnye d'iaki XVI v.*, St. Petersburg 1888, Ukaz. lich. imen, 41

[240] The source, *Russkii biograficheskii slovar'*, vol. Kna-Kiu, St. Petersburg 1903 renders no corroboration of its claim. Baron, Samuel, "Thrust and Parry", *Oxford Slavonic Papers* (1988) vol.21, 19-40, 36 n.52. Similar: Gazenvinkel', K.B., *Knigi razriadnye v ofitsial'nykh ikh spiskakh kak material dlia istorii Sibiri XVII v.*, Kazan' 1892, 22

[241] Baron, "Thrust", 35; Demidova, *Pervye*, 15

[242] "Rodoslovie Kniaziakh Kurakinykh X-XIX vv.", in: *Arkhiv kn. F.A.Kurakina*, vol.2, St. Petersburg 1890, 357; Rüß, *Herren*, 428 n.103. It is unlikely that Kurakin was banned to Tobol'sk, cf. Preobrazhenskii, *Pervye*, 60-1 on amnesty; Penrose, "Influences", 365; Lantzeff, *Siberia*, 204.

reign of Kurakin and his colleagues.[243] The preceding events are telling for the way the *Personenverband* could find it useful to subordinate itself to a capable leader and influential noble even to the point of openly renouncing the sovereignty of the tsar in Moscow. While authority in Moscow largely declined due to the devastating effects of the Time of Troubles, Kurakin led the Siberian cossacks very effectively. Dating back to his contacts to Sweden during the Time of Troubles, he knew about the powers of western navies and trade companies. He reacted quickly when a Russian merchant from the White Sea coast reported in Tobol'sk that English and Dutch merchant ships had tried to reach the river Ob' by way of the sea. To secure Russian influence as well as the grip of Tobol'sk and the cossacks on Siberian trade, Kurakin proposed closing the sea route to Siberia. This route, leading from the river Pechora by way of the sea to the Yamal peninsula, which was traversed via rivers and a burdensome carriage, finally allowed Northern Russian merchants to reach the trade hub of Mangazeia without even touching the government outpost in Tobol'sk, thereby effectively evading taxes. Under the pretext of foreign competition, the sea route was closed by Tobol'sk cossacks, who eagerly attended to this unrewarding task.[244] This was the first step in the process of channelling Siberian trade exclusively to selected border posts. At this point of his tenure, Kurakin had good reasons to expect a reward on his return to Moscow: As his instruction demanded, he indeed had successfully sought the profit of the sovereign.[245] Siberian cossacks profited from this decision as well as from sending missions to China. Rather than the Bukharan intermediary trade, the latter design promised rich profits to those entitled to undertake and lead these missions. Kurakin had already eagerly promoted foreign relations and trade in Tobol'sk and the southern parts of the Siberian possessions. Increasingly self-assured as well as encouraged by a wave of popular acclaim, Kurakin sent Tara ataman Vasilii Tiumenets and *desiatnik* Ivan Petrov to the Oirat Altyn-Khan in 1618 with an instruction making them his own envoys:

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[243] Pokrovskii, *Tobolskii arkhiereiskii*, kniga v., ll.120-2, 142ob., 145. Kurakin faced a changed climate at court, since Filaret, who had learned to hate the Poles during his captivity in Poland, had returned to Muscovy in 1619.

[244] An *ostrozhek* with a garrison of 40 to 50 men was set up near the portage: Butsinskii, *Zaselenie*, 173, 175-6.

[245] Cf. Demidova, N.F., *Pervye russkie diplomaty v Kitae*, Moscow 1966, 15 n.25. Butsinskii, *Zaselenie*, 174; RIB vol.II no.254, 11, 1055, 1059, 1066-7, 1071-2, 1075

"...prince...Kurakin and colleagues and not the sovereign gave orders [for] the mission..."[246]

The apparent wilfulness on the part of the voevoda speaking these lines was addressed by Moscow already before the cossacks returned to Tobol'sk. On 31st December 1616, the *boyar duma* decided – without mentioning the tsar – that further missions to the Mongols or to China should not be sent; the resolution was sent to Tobol'sk the next day.[247] Several years later, the decree had to be repeated and strengthened by the boyar, Tobol'sk voevoda and energetic reformer Iurii Ianshevich Suleshev; but even he earned anything but joyous support by this measure.[248]

With this decision, Moscow stirred up unforeseen protests which profoundly influenced relations between Moscow and the Siberian cossacks. Even half a century later, at the time of the uprisings in Moscow and Tomsk, petitioners remembered the election of tsar Mikhail Romanov.[249] Confronted with a leader, whether a tsar or not, just three years after his investiture, who was not furthering their aims, the cossacks strongly favoured a change at least in their local leadership. Mirroring the close relations between traders and cossacks, a merchant was reported saying in Verkhotur'e:

"We obey the decree from Tobol'sk, not from Moscow. We would be better off if our Ivan Semenovich Kurakin was sovereign. Moscow is far away."[250]

Much more serious than this incident was the rebellion faced in July 1617 by the voevoda of Verkhotur'e who had been assigned to his position shortly after the *ukaz* was issued. The very setting of this rebellion was uncommon for later Siberian town rebellions: It was not directed against any particular measure of the voevoda, but against Moscow's rule in general. The local cossacks of this border post and customs barrier on the way to Siberia, which had risen in importance after the measures introduced by Kurakin did not, even in the beginning, obey the new voevoda, Fedor Pleshcheev. The voevoda had no specific personal interest in painting the cossacks in

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[246] *Russko-mongol'skie otnosheniia. 1607-1636*, Moscow 1959, no.22, ll.14-5; cf. Demidova, *Pervye*, 21

[247] Demidova, *Pervye*, 16

[248] Egorov, V., "Suleshov", in: *Russkii biograficheskii slovar'*, izdanie Imperatorskago Istoricheskago Obshchestva, St. Petersburg 1912, 138; on Suleshev, see, chapt.II.

[249] Tikhomirov, M.N., "Pskovskoe vosstanie 1650 g.", *Klassovaia bor'ba v Rossii XVII v.*, Moscow: 1969, 79-85

[250] Bakhrushin, "Voevody", 262

dark colours, and his report repeats the features of the *Personenverband*, while stressing their open disloyalty. Pleshcheev claimed that he asked the cossacks:

> "Why do you swear an oath by night…what is your plot with [the cossack; C.W.] Fedor Durov. And Fedor Durov and his plotters shouted…swearwords at me and pulled my beard and said we obey Tobol'sk decrees but not Moscow decrees; it would be good if our prince I.S. Kurakin was sovereign with us and Moscow is far away; and I your vassal answered we have only one sovereign in Moscow and not in Tobol'sk. And for this Fedor Durov and his plotters wanted to kill me."[251]

Assigned in 1615 as the Time of Troubles was ending, Kurakin inherited a troubled realm. Many men formally in the service of the tsar had just returned from Moscow and the north of Russia, where they had become accustomed to cossack ways, living virtually beyond the influence of the tsar or his boyars. According to a contemporary report, even the streets of Moscow at the very time of tsar Mikhail's election in 1613 were controlled by cossacks:

> "Among the boyars nobody dare confront the cossacks or meet them on their way, and [the boyars; C.W.] make way for them and even bow their heads."

In the devastated city, they behaved like the typical *Personenverband*:

> "Cossacks walk in Moscow in groups, even where it is impossible to move in the bazaar – twenty or thirty men, all armed, wilful, and they never turn up less than fifteen men or at least in a group of ten."[252]

To establish his leadership among these men, Kurakin had to make concessions – he distributed land and peasants to the cossacks without collecting appropriate taxes and delayed dispatch of the land registers to Moscow.[253] However, he only became a popular leader by initiating missions with far-reaching and astonishing aims such as contacts to the Mongols and China. As Moscow and tsar Mikhail seemed neither willing nor able to help the cossacks to attain their aims, they oriented quickly towards leaders tallying with their ideal of direct and tangible leadership. Attempts to acclaim the voevodas of Tobol'sk as sovereigns and tsars of the Siberian realm occurred frequently as the Time of Troubles came to an end in Muscovy.[254]

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[251] RGADA f.199 Portfeli G.F. Millera no.478 I l.66 (petition)
[252] Stanislavskii, *Grazhdanskaia*, 85
[253] Pokrovskii, *Tobol'skii arkhiereiskii*, kn. v, ll.120-5, 142 ob., 145
[254] Bakhrushin, "Voevody", 262 presents this as evidence for the overwhelming power of Tobol'sk as compared to other Siberian towns.

Despite lacking any means of direct control, especially the capacity to send troops to quell a rebellion – thus differing decisively from its Mongol predecessor[255] – Moscow never lost its possessions in Siberia. Since Muscovy was not a nomad power, and above all was interested in the fur trade, it would have been counterproductive to send substantial forces to quell rebellions among the cossacks. Although this was a significant difference from cossacks on the western side of the Urals, Moscow was not left without means to ensure Siberian cossacks remained within its sphere of influence. The reports of cossack envoys returning from missions to the Mongols and to China reflect a recurrent obstacle to any form of formal independence – the solidarity of the sovereigns in the area of the former Mongol empire. It is in these years when cossacks in Siberia first reached out for the steppe they could not dominate that the Mongols and other successors of the Mongol empire confronted them with the principles of legitimacy they observed. Though the instruction Kurakin had given to ataman Vasilii Tiumenets and *desiatnik* Ivan Petrov stated explicitly that they were to deliver their message in the name of prince Kurakin, they quickly changed their mind when confronted with the Kyrgyz princelings:

> "The Kyrgyz princelings with all their men, on hearing that they were sent to the Altyn-tsar as envoys of the [Moscow; C.W.] sovereign, and not by the voevodas, were merry and allowed them to travel through their lands without fear"[256]

Similar situations occurred at the Saians and the Altyn-Khan himself. In short, cossacks were treated favourably as they claimed they travelled on tsar Mikhail's orders, "and not the voevodas'". An explanation for this behaviour at a time of weakness of the Muscovite state is afforded by the status of Moscow as a contender in the struggle for the heritage of the Mongol empire. The Altyn-khan and the Enisei Kyrgyz were descendants of Dzhingis-Khan, and would accept neither Russian cossacks nor any *qazaq* who explicitly disrespected the principles of steppe legitimacy.[257]

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[255] Vernadsky, *Mongols*, 214-5

[256] *Russko-mongol'skie*, no.22, ll.3-4

[257] Halperin, Charles, "Ivan IV and Chinggis Khan", *JBGO* vol.51,4 (2003), 481-497, here 497; Kappeler, *Vielvölkerreich*, 42; Demidova, N.F. (ed.), *Russko-kitaiskie otnosheniia v XVII v.* [hereafter: *RKO*], vol.1: 1608-1683, Moscow 1969, 108, 109, 115

Though records on the Petlin mission do not refer to the event, the assigned leader of the mission, voevoda of Eniseisk Trubchaninov never figured again after the envoys had left Tobol'sk, and the cossack interpreter, and eventual leader of the mission Ivan Petlin of Tomsk wrote the report to Moscow.[258] He was always mentioned with his comrade, Andrei Madov, and during his mission to China he was further accompanied by two cossacks.[259] The mission had been taken over by Petlin and Madov. They had posed as the tsar's envoys, which brought a complaint from the East Mongol Altyn Khan, who was helping them to reach China in 1619 in a letter to Moscow. He demanded that the Russian tsar send

"your own envoys…and not the Siberian people".

In the same month, a letter from Mikhail Fedorovich to the Altyn Khan warned the Mongols to distinguish between the tsar's emissaries and those sent by "Siberian people".[260] This gentlemen's agreement between the Altyn Khan and the "White Khan", as the Mongol leader called tsar Mikhail several times in his letter, and a confirmation of the boyar duma decision of 1616 in the instruction to the new voevoda of Tobol'sk in 1620 stalled all missions to China for decades. It even curtailed the already well-established relations with the East Mongol Oirats. Set in the formative years of Siberian cossack institutions, this provided a lasting lesson – there was no way beyond the tsar, who made the best patron to the *Personenverband* in any steppe environment even at a period of Muscovy's drastic impoverishment and powerlessness. Nevertheless, facing the dual dangers of foreign interference in Siberia and cossack revolts, it was high time for a written confirmation of cossack customs, integrating them into Muscovite political culture.

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[258] Demidova and Miasnikov believe an instruction existed since the report by Petlin answered "directly to all questions discussed by Russian diplomats with Merrick", the representative of the Muscovy company. However, Kurakin may have known about these negotiations through his own channels, since they were no secret in Moscow: Demidova, *Pervye*, 21

[259] Demidova, *Pervye*, 22

[260] *RKO* vol.1, 72-78 translated in the seventeenth century in Moscow. The text states "s*ibirskie liudi*", not to be confused with "*inozemtsy*".

Integration through Institutional Adaptation: Advice and the Cossacks

In June 1684 the Irkutsk voevoda Leont'ii Kislianskii instructed the *syn boiarskii* Iakov Turchaninov and the icon-painter Vasilii Korotov to search for and exploit ores and "blue mineral colours" in the Vitim valley on the eastern side of Lake Baikal. After crossing the lake with its treacherous winds Turchaninov sailed about four hundred kilometres to the north until he reached the small town of Barguzinsk, part of the district (*uezd*) of Irkutsk. There, he demanded that the local *prikazchik* assign workers and the necessary equipment. What seemed to be a routine request actually doomed the whole expedition. Iakov Turchaninov indignantly described in his report to the voevoda the deliberations following his request. The *prikazchik* Ivan Maksimovich Perfil'ev was a renowned Irkutsk *syn boiarskii* with an even more illustrious future to come.[261] His father had led the second expedition to found Irkutsk, and on an earlier occasion had shown his extraordinary capacity to restrain his cossacks on a successful mission to pacify the Buryats, who were rebelling after the tribulations caused by three competing cossack *iasak* collecting groups sent to the Angara from different towns. This experienced leader did not behave like the allegedly all-powerful military commander imagined in some accounts of Siberian cossacks. As a reaction to Turchaninov's request, Ivan Perfil'ev assembled Barguzinsk cossacks in the *prikazchik*'s office, reported on the demand his fellow *syn boiarskii* had made and asked the cossacks openly for advice:

"...shall we give [them] mounts and hands and a guide and equipment?"[262]

It was necessary for him to ask and have his authority reconfirmed, although the tsar through his representative, the voevoda, had already given it to him. This was a common situation: in many cases, Siberian cossacks elected their commanders. However, this source differs significantly from others on this subject. It was not the result of a cossack insurrection, but a decision in a normal situation, which was not particularly charged and thus reveals what is usually neglected – the all-too common

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[261] See chapt.V.

[262] RGADA f.1121 op.1 no.60 ll.65-6 (Iakov Turchaninov's report). On Maksim: Okladnikov, A.P., *Ocherki iz istorii zapadnykh Buryat-mongolov*, Leningrad 1937, 60-2.

details of decision-making in mutual agreement with an assigned leader who could marshal powers beyond the *Personenverband*'s immediate sphere of authority.

Thus when Ivan Perfil'ev asked the cossacks for advice, he was summarily acclaimed:

> "Upon you the great sovereigns laid ["authority" is not mentioned explicitly]; whatever you wish, so you will do."[263]

Most striking in this statement is the absence of any confirmation by the cossacks of Perfil'ev's ultimate, unrestricted command over them – they merely acknowledged that the tsar's decree was a source of legitimacy independent of the *Personenverband.* The sentence is an accurate representation of the distribution of power within the Barguzinsk *Personenverband.* By stressing Perfil'ev's actions and intention while omitting their own, they established a fact that from their point of view needed no verbal expression: the absence of any commitment on the part of the cossacks to fulfil Kislianskii's demands. Perfil'ev knew very well how much he needed their support, and thus stressed in his answer the unity of his own and the cossacks' interests:

> "And he Ivan told the serving men: [If we] give them mounts and workers and a guide and equipment to exploit the minerals…they will exploit them, [then] it will be the merit of Kislianskii and the Irkutsk cossacks but not my merit and not yours, Barguzinsk serving men."[264]

By stressing this identity of interest, he downplayed any sense of obligation to his fellow *deti boiarskie* in Irkutsk – no feeling of a common estate bound him to them, no local sentiment stopped him on his course against the order of the voevoda. However, this did not affect his future assignments – among them interim duties as a voevoda in Eniseisk and Irkutsk. Even considerations of rank had no effect on his decision – Kislianskii was a *stol'nik.*[265] Perhaps surprising to a modern reader, Perfil'ev did not give any orders – he contented himself with suggesting a course of action:

> "…and he said to the serving men: Are there any volunteers among you who want to travel to Kudchinsk fortress and towards the source of the Vitim river … where to find

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[263] RGADA f.1121 op.1 no.60 l.65. On the sovereign's affair, see chapt.III.
[264] Ibid.
[265] Vershinin, *Voevodskoe*, 156-8

the mineral ores and I will give you mounts [equipment etc.] and you hand in a petition to the great sovereign at the *prikazchik*'s office (*s''ezzhaia izba*)..."[266]

Perfil'ev thus stresses a conscience for procedural elements of law. In his speech, action is represented as necessarily emerging from the cossack *Personenverband*. In a move characteristic of a leader of the *Personenverband,* he then proposes an alternative – and he explains it as a powerful fusion of the principles of the *Personenverband* and the legitimation as a *prikazchik* conferred on him by the tsar. As long as he was the unquestioned leader of the *Personenverband*, and could propose a compelling aim and course of action, he had the actual power to enforce his own and the implied will of the *Personenverband*:

"And as you search for these blue mineral ores it will be my merit and yours as well but if there are no volunteers among you I will beat them and force them to bring a petition and travel to the Vitim river."[267]

Stressing merit, Perfil'ev took up the cossacks' service ethics.[268] Perfil'ev judged the situation accurately, for his speech was fully endorsed by the cossacks. The dismayed eyewitness and competitor reported how his own brother Grigorii, the "Barguzinsk servitors...with comrades" handed in a petition and received all Iakov had applied for – the *Personenverband* thus again overriding kinship concerns. It would have been impossible for Grigorii to act against the cossacks' interest and support his brother, even if he had been so inclined. Iakov received only mounts; he could merely report helplessly to Irkutsk that without equipment he was unable to dig the frozen ground. In the meantime, he asserted, he watched his brother and his men ride to the Vitim river on twelve camels with all necessary equipment and stay there for two weeks, not even allowing Iakov Turchaninov to observe their exploits.[269]

This highly formalised way of giving advice already had a long history. In 1648 partisans of the first voevoda of Tomsk, Shcherbatyi, who had been deposed by rebels, tried to justify one of the voevoda's measures by citing the cossacks' decision. The clash was about the mode of building the new fortifications, and

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[266] RGADA f.1121 op.1 no.60 l.65
[267] Ibid. l.66
[268] Kumke, *Geführte*, 100
[269] There is a possible alternative interpretation to this source – Iakov may have colluded with his brother and Perfil'ev to avoid giving the voevoda and the tsar their share. Although this cannot be proven in this case, it would only reinforce the conclusions regarding institutions suggested in this account

Shcherbatyi's partisans tried to demonstrate that huge payments to that end, somewhat out of step with the tradition of work dues owed by the cossacks, had been agreed by the cossacks:

"According to the advice of all servitors…[and] on their…orders"[270]

The formula that the opponents of the rebels employed in one of the century's major town rebellions was a citation from the official description of Ermak's campaign. In 1621, as the dust of the Time of Troubles had just settled, and Siberian cossacks were easily roused to confrontation or rebellion, the new patriarch and father of tsar Mikhail Romanov, Filaret, sent the first archbishop to Tobol'sk, Kipriian, to pacify them.[271] The latter tried to enhance his public standing by disseminating a revised version of the small number of survivors' accounts he had collected of Ermak Timofeevich's expedition in 1582 across the Urals to conquer the Western Siberian Khanate of Sibir'.[272] The text of the *sinodik*, which included the names of the dead cossacks, was read from the pulpit in Tobol'sk's cathedral of St. Sophia as part of the regular commemoration of the dead on Sunday of Orthodoxy.[273] These and other forms of commemorations served to reinforce a social group's sense of identity; they replaced the commemorated in the group and were bound to forms acknowledged in the group by convention.[274] While private commemoration were initiated by donations, usually by nobles and the gentry to secure memorial services after their death or that of their kin, the *sinodik pravoslaviia* (synodikon of Orthodoxy) served to dissociate the church dogmatically from heresy and to affirm ecclesiastical and secular hierarchy. Dating from the synod of 843, it contained the decisions of the seven ecumenical councils and a list of the names of those who had succumbed to anathema; on the other hand all orthodox dead were publicly promised everlasting remembrance. The highest ecclesiastical and secular dignitaries were called upon by name. Entry in the *sinodik* of Orthodoxy was not private, but an act under public law decreed by the ecclesiastical and secular power. The synodikon was

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[270] Pokrovskii, *Tomsk*, 157

[271] Pokrovskii, *Tobol'skii arkhiereiskii*, ll.125 ob, 126

[272] Ibid., 236; Aleksandrov, *Vlast'*, 79

[273] *Nedelia pravoslaviia*, first Sunday of Great Lent. Steindorff, *Memoria*, 60. 36 cossacks listed: *PSRL* 36.1, 78.

[274] Romodanovskaia, E.K., *Russkaia literatura v Sibiri*, Novosibirsk 1973, 36; Steindorff, *Memoria*, 234, 24

extended when decisions of later synods or new anathemata were includcd as well as those good orthodox who were regarded worthy of remembrance by name in this particularly honorific document and in the ritual of Orthodoxy (*chin pravoslaviia*); the lists of the *sinodiki* became differentiated according to region. Part of those worthy were also the fallen, for example the first Russian manuscript of the ritual of Orthodoxy, the "Ecumenical *sinodik*" of Moscow Uspenskii cathedral contained the list of the slain at the river Voza in 1378 and on the Don during the campaign against Mamai in 1380; an addendum was made for the fallen at Kazan' in 1552 and it was the latter part of the sixteenth century when the *chin pravoslaviia* started to grow.[275] In 1636 Bishop Nektarii solicited that the tsar, the patriarch and the ecclesiastical council acknowledged Ermak and his cossacks as martyrs. It was proclaimed regularly not just in Tobol'sk, but also in Moscow, thereby obtaining relevance for all of Muscovy.[276] Thus the cossacks strove for higher dignity, although their aims fell short of demanding acceptance as nobles. This was a characteristic shared with cossacks in Poland, who publicly raised the issue of the Orthodox Church in 1632. They did not aspire to the social privileges of nobility, although they demanded the right to elect the king, reflecting a different institutional environment in Poland.[277]

On the other hand, the *sinodik* emphasised the elective character of the *Personenverband* and its valour, both conveyed in Christian terms in the annalistic notes added to the *sinodik*.[278] The original *sinodik Ermakovym kazakam* (in the *chin pravoslaviia*) was adamant to underline that God and not the tsar elected Ermak's cossacks to fight and overcome the heathen *besermeny* of Sibir'. However, this occurred in later redactions, when the text "*bozhieu pomoshchiiu eshche*" was added on the margin[279]:

> "In the second summer since the conquest of Sibir' with God's aid and due to their valour Ermak and his retinue…"

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[275] Ibid., 60-1, 234
[276] Aleksandrov, *Vlast*, 79; Bakhrushin, *Trudy* vol.3 pt.I, 19, 20, 30, 31.
[277] Kumke, *Geführte*, 53-7
[278] Steindorff, *Memoria*, 188
[279] Romodanovskaia, *Literatura*, 40

The church thus aimed at taking in the cossacks, whom it still had to accommodate in 1621, as another citation underlines. In this case, the original text set God's election in opposition to the tsar's orders:

> "[Ermak and his unanimous retinue]...whom God has elected and who were sent neither by glorious men, nor by the instruction of the tsar's voevodas to consecrate the place and triumph over the Muslim (*besermenskii*) tsar Kuchium...."[280]

The term "to elect (*izbra*)" also appears in a context that underlines Ermak's and the cossacks' free and strong will[281] and the great valour of the *Personenverband.*[282] An important reason why they were elected was also the cossacks' consent:

> "God elected them from among the common people and armed the ataman Ermak Timofeev *syn*[283] Povol'skii and the unanimous and outstandingly valiant *druzhina* with glory, warlikeness and initiative."[284]

Publicly the church thus approved of the participation of cossacks in vital decisions. In the text, the *Personenverband* is evoked when Ermak is depicted seeking advice from his cossacks and the question arises whether the Tatars, whom the cossacks had only recently fought to conquer the khanate of Sibir' should now be helped against the onslaught of the Kazakhs, who, according to Tatar claims threatened both:

> "...the impious Koracha, the advisor of the [Siberian] tsars, sent his envoys to Ermak and the comrades [to ask for] men [in a common effort] to defend themselves against the Kazakh horde. According to the decision of all comrades (*po porigovoru vsego tovarstva*), believing [the envoys'] impious and unbelieving vows, he sent ataman Ivan Kol'tso with forty comrades to Koracha..."[285]

Bad advice is equalled here to infidelity, threatening exclusion from the orthodox cosmos and community, which combined with *muchenichestvo*, martyrdom, was a common topos among Siberian cossacks.[286] Official decrees issued in Moscow,

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[280] *PSRL* vol.36.1, 380, l.84

[281] On the ambivalence of *volia*: Kivelson, "Bitter".

[282] *Druzhina* is used only in these texts. Since other sources never feature this term, it is not a satisfactory alternative for *Personenverband. Druzhina* is used without a convincing explanation: Nikitin, "Traditsiiakh", 6.

[283] "*syn*" was used analogously to the patronymic. In some cases, as the *stol'nik* and deposed voevoda Af.T. Savelov, it signified diminished honour, or vice versa, as with Perfil'ev, who after election as *sud'ia* was referred to locally with *–vich*: RGADA f.1121 op.2 no.160, l.13 (investigation).

[284] *PSRL* vol.36.1, 380, l.84

[285] Idem, l.86

[286] Steindorff, *Memoria*, 71-8. *PSRL* vol.36.1, 380, l.84 ob. See 237

however, were expressed in the formula "the boyars advised (*prikazali*) and the grand prince resolved".[287] What is unfamiliar here is the subjects giving advice – in the duma the boyars, not lowly cossacks were the advisors, and they gave their advice to the tsar, not to an ataman. Even on an official ideological level, command of the cossacks was thus not single-handed, autocratic or military and hierarchical, but routinely involved the participation of the cossacks.

This was not the only instance in which the model of the tsar and his wise advisors was applied to other spheres of society. As Soldat has shown, Iosif Volotskii directly referred to perceptions of the tsar and the boyar duma to legitimate his monastic rule. In Iosif's rule a council of twelve monks advised the *igumen*.[288] The *sinodik* also became the source for versions of the Siberian annals spread during the seventeenth century throughout Siberia.[289] In the Likhachevskaia edition, this theme of advice is expanded. In this passage, far from criticising decisions aided by cossacks, there is a clear allusion to the theme of the bad and the good advisors, which was so prominent in Muscovite publications dealing with the problem of the tsar's powers. While Muscovites used this theme of the bad advisors to the faithful tsar to legitimate rebellions against particular measures of the tsar or his chancelleries and boyars, the church used the theme of advice in the Likhachevskaia redaction to call in question particular decisions by cossacks or voevodas. The decision to help the Tatars is presented thus:

> "At that time they did not give good advice and forgot what is said: "Do not believe every spirit, but find out whether it is sent by God or the devil". They behaved cunningly (*lukavaia*) and deviously and handed the ataman and the cossacks over to the impious enemy.[290]

The terms "*lukavaia*" and "*vragom v ruki nechestivym*" are allusions to Iosif's *Enlightener*, which has proved highly controversial. Recent scholars have established that the author's intentions were far from opportunistic with regard to the tsar's power, but rather aimed at establishing and invigorating a body of "holy scriptures" the function of which is best understood in the way he included his own texts. Once

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[287] Hosking, *Russians*, 93. "Prikazati" could also mean "to give orders".
[288] Soldat, Cornelia, *Urbild und Abbild*, München 2001, 201
[289] See *PSRL* vol.36.1
[290] Ibid., 124, l.18

he had written them, Iosif referred to his own texts as "holy scriptures".[291] Soldat has shown that *Slovo* 7 and 16, dealing with the duties of the subjects towards the sovereign and the possibility of a bad tsar and, on the other hand, with the duty of the tsar to eradicate "heresies" do not contradict each other as has been claimed.[292] Slovo 7 has been misinterpreted as a kind of orthodox theory of resistance – yet in the title Iosif clearly stated that it was about the way subjects should treat the tsar and other authority figures – about the way to perform the bow and to serve. He then states that since ordinary men as well as the tsar are both replicas of God, they should treat the tsar with the same reverence as other human beings – and thus perform the bow.[293] However, since not all tsars are good, Iosif concludes:

> "Thus it is right and proper to bow before them and to serve with the body, but not spiritually, and to give them the tsarist honour, but not the divine, as the Lord says: give the tsar what is the tsar's, and God what is God's. If you bow and serve in this way, it is not detrimental to your soul. Rather you will learn to fear God: for the tsar is God's servant, assigned to men for change and for punishment."

For Iosif and the sixteenth century in general, the tsar was designated by God's will to fulfil salvific history: if he contravened the commonly-accepted standards, it was up to everyone to decide whether to obey an order or not. In both cases, the decision did not affect the most important goal of the human being – heavenly salvation, which was for a considerable part of the seventeenth century still more important than the good order and tribulations of this world. At the same time, God designated the tsar even if he behaved like Satan – a tormentor or hangman (*muchitel'*) could be a necessary device to punish the people:

> "Yet if the tsar, who rules men, wants to rule beyond himself – with abominable tribulations and sins, even greed and rage, slyness and falseness, pride and fury, more evil than all others – such a tsar is not God's servant, but a devil, not a tsar, but a tormentor. Due to his deceit Our Lord Jesus Christ called such a tsar not tsar, but fox: Go, he said, tell that fox."

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[291] Soldat, *Urbild*, 198, here 298

[292] Szeftel, Marc, "Josif Volotsky's Political Ideas in a New Historical Perspective", *JBGO* vol. 13 (1965), pp. 19-29, 28-9; Ostrowski, Donald, *Muscovy and the Mongols*, Cambridge 1998, 205-6; Raeff, Marc, "An Early Theorist of Absolutism", 87-8

[293] On the bow see chapt.III.

The mentioning of the fox is an allusion to Luke 13,32, where the Pharisees warn Jesus that Herod wants to kill him. Jesus calls Herod, although he was a legitimate ruler, a fox and declares that he is ready to be a martyr carrying on with his wondrous deeds, which has attracted Herod's scorn in the first place. Luke then follows up with Christ's lament, which hints at salvation at the end of time. In this context, 'cunning' *(lukavstvo)* acts to define the characteristic of a tsar, obedience to whom was not obligatory to salvation:

> "The Prophet said: the apostate ruler dies, since his ways are gloomy. ...you shall not serve such a tsar or prince on behalf of his Godlessness and cunning, whether he torments or threatens with death."

Although this prophecy is a falsification, it clearly states its intentions. These allusions were well-known to Muscovites – the *Enlightener* was a very popular book, and many of its concepts were widely used in later works.[294] Though ordinary Muscovites were not commonly literate, we can presume from the way the *Sinodik Ermakovym kazakam* was popularised and, for example, from the frequency of the use of the term "torment" in relevant court cases about misbehaviour of officials and rebels[295], that understanding of relevant allusions was not restricted to a small elite, but part of a culture shared by wider segments of the population.

The "Sinodik Ermakovym kazakam" and later editions thus parallel the ataman with his advisors and comrades, the cossacks, to the tsar and his boyars performing parallel functions to which the same words apply. Parallels are familiar in Muscovite theories of legitimation: the tsar himself was paralleled to God, not as a human being, but inasmuch as his powers were concerned. The parallel was perceived in the same way as an icon – as the replica of the archetype, a holy order as it was perceived in the Bible and the teachings of the Early Fathers. Thus a whole area of decision-making was sanctified and integrated unchanged into salvific history. Cossacks' decisions were officially sanctioned, but they remained subject to deliberation and could be reversed as well as the proponents held responsible if their

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[294] Soldat, *Abbild*, 208-16; Martin, Janet, *Medieval Russia, 980-1584*, Cambridge 1995, 264-5

[295] Aleksandrov, *Vlast'*, 195. Cf. ch. V: Isakov and Panikadilshchikov: RGADA f.1121 op.1 no.8, 14, 17, 23; Beiton and Cherkasov: ibid. op.2 no.164 l.10; Andrei Osharovskoi: ibid. no.183 l.2; ibid. no.153 l.1

decisions were construed as illegal, evil "bad advice" – if it was possible to get hold of them.

Muscovy thus had found a very versatile method of institutional adaptation, which was particularly adapted to the frontier environment and to a vast empire with varying social formations. Institutional change is a highly contentious issue due to the many interests routinely involved. Institutions only gain their value to the degree that others accept them. Their value to individuals loyal to these institutions depends on the degree to which they can expect that they will meet with predictable reactions in other places or in different social environments; this is important even over the course of time, since trade operations across Siberia usually took months. In this regard, institutional change can be problematic since all individuals that have once adapted to a particular institutional environment and started to build their futures on these institutions' reliability would have to accommodate to changed institutions. Ambitious reform plans usually engender huge costs in individual learning and information, and therefore easily founder on a lack of popular appeal or popular antagonism.[296] Muscovy likened an institution that was adapted to the social environment of the frontier territories to another institution known in the central areas west of the Urals. Thereby, institutional change at both the frontier and in the Muscovite heartland was effectively by-passed, while people in the frontier area gained the bonus of direct, legitimate access to central organisations without forfeiting their cherished traditions.

Intermediary Ranks

The complex pattern of assignments of *deti boiarskie*[297] and their attitudes towards the *Personenverband* reveals them as middlemen between the chancellery and voevodas on one side and the *Personenverband* on the other.[298] Instead of emphasising the long line of their fabled ancestors, like the gentry in the central parts of Russia[299], they proudly remembered the well-recorded deeds of their ancestors

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[296] Offe, *Designing*, 25-6; Krasner, "Sovereignty", 81; Göhler, "Institutionenwandel", in: idem, *Institutionenwandel*, 21-56

[297] See Lantzeff, *Siberia*, 62 n.2

[298] *Deti boiarskie* "formed a separate estate": Vasil'ev, *Zabaikal'skie*, t.I prilozh, 25.

[299] Kivelson, *Autocracy*

during the conquest of Siberia, and stressed recent service in Siberia.[300] Successful campaigns and explorations into unknown parts of Siberia not only indicated loyalty and good service to the tsar, but also a leader's popularity among the cossacks. Or so the Siberian chancellery thought: it was constantly searching for reliable information on the current state of affairs, but remained far from the arena of action making it hard to estimate the current popularity of any cossack leader. Such information could be vital when news reached Moscow that one of the Siberian towns had again deposed its voevoda, urging a swift official dismissal and calling for an investigation by an outsider with sufficient authority. In such a situation, relief for the battered and hated current voevoda could not be delayed until a new nobleman from Moscow had made the burdensome journey. As has been shown above in the case of Krasnoiarsk voevoda Durnovo and *pis'mennyi golova* Lisovskii, one's reputation among angry cossacks could literally be a matter of life and death. Neither the *razriad* voevodas, nor the chancellery could possibly seek security by subordinating the *deti boiarskie* completely to their influence. Afonasii Beiton, the Irkutsk cossack *golova* already portrayed, used his popularity with the Transbaikalian cossacks to stay in control of the explosive situation as the cossacks besieged Irkutsk in 1696. According to Cherkasov's denunciation, he frequently conferred with the Transbaikalians at night on their barge, but he eventually did not implement any conspiratorial plans and did not surrender the walls to the rebels.[301] In 1697/1698 he helped as second *prikazchik* – an unusual arrangement – to re-establish in Udinsk his son Andrei, who had been ousted by the rebels in 1696. Nevertheless, in the following years Andrei Beiton took the safe option and supported the *Personenverband*, even to the point of risking an investigation by the voevoda of Irkutsk.[302] He was one of the "courtiers of the Moscow list" in Siberia, who much like the Siberian *deti boiarskie* never enjoyed equal rights with their central Russian homonyms, not to mention the right to serve in Moscow.[303] In the long run, and under the condition of *Personenverband* influence, men such as Beiton could curb rebellious spirits in the ever more important

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[300] RGADA op.1 no.468 l.28 (investigation); Vershinin, *Voevodskoe*, 38

[301] See 66-7

[302] Lantzeff, *Siberia*, 63. Ogloblin, *Obozrenie* vol.IV; RGADA f.214 no.340. For details, see chapter V.

[303] Akishin, *Politseiskoe*, 13

Transbaikalian towns, which soon became rich when the caravan trade found a shorter route after 1703.[304] Their engagement in trade – Iakov became the leader of a caravan to China – and popularity among cossacks suited Afonasii Beiton's sons well and they frequently held the office of *prikazchik* in Udinsk and Selenginsk well into the second decade of the eighteenth century.[305] The enterprising Iakov Beiton was sent in the aftermath of the rebellion as temporary voevoda to Krasnoiarsk, where his reputation apparently was less resounding. Krasnoiarsk cossacks were still too distrustful, and satisfied with their "elected" voevoda Lisovskii, which made them interfere with the act of relief. Iakov Beiton could not even check the town's accounts, but was at least neither despised nor ousted – he formally held the position until a new voevoda, Petr Savich Musin-Pushkin popular for his successful campaigns arrived.[306]

The *deti boiarskie's* position between the voevoda and the cossacks was further strengthened by several factors. Assignment to this rank was restricted to the voevoda of the *razriad*, which comprised several towns.[307] Owing to the quarrels between different towns and their *Personenverbände*, the voevodas' interest in profit and the subordinate voevodas' insistence on rank, which was frequently similar to that of the *razriad* voevoda's, divisive differences in opinion were part and parcel of relations between voevodas. An independent and popular *syn boiarskii* who could be sent in case of conflict was therefore always an asset for the *razriad* voevoda. Another major concern for the chancellery was apprehension about what might happen to the sovereign's interests while the cossacks and their frequently exchanged elective leaders ruled the town exclusively, let alone the danger of a spread of rebellion to other towns. The Siberian chancellery as well as the voevodas of Tobol'sk and the *razriad* towns in many cases tried to calm the excited crowd of cossacks by assigning a loyal *syn boiarskii* temporarily in place of a voevoda.[308] In other cases, the elected leader was deliberately chosen by the cossacks, showing their

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[304] Leont'eva, *Sluzhilye*, 118

[305] Akishin, *Politseiskoe*, 178-9

[306] Ibid., 310, 313, 320; RGADA f.1121 op.1 no.468 ll.8-47 (investigation); RGADA f.214 kn.1619 ll.21, 25, 37, 50, 53, 58-9, 63, 71, 76, 84, 97, 109 (investigation); Vershinin, *Voevodskoe upravlenie*, 160; Bakhrushin, *Krasnoiarsk*, 191.

[307] Lantzeff, *Siberia*, 63

[308] Vershinin, *Voevodskoe*, 38

loyalty by backing a man with a long record of loyal service such as Perfil'ev in Irkutsk in 1696/1697.[309] The aged Ivan Perfil'ev was one of the leading figures in Irkutsk. He was one of the founders of the fort, who had led several successful campaigns in the Angara-region and whose solid reputation was reflected in his two-storey house in the hamlet named after him as well as by such unusual assignments as in 1688 the post of the voevoda of Eniseisk, a *razriad* town.[310] In 1697 as "elected judge" of Irkutsk – a title sometimes used for elective positions in town rebellions – he sent another *syn boiarskii*, Andrei Moskvitinov, who, despite his illiteracy, investigated successfully the exploits of pre-rebellion *prikazchiki* as well as those of the rebellion's elected leaders in the same posts.[311] Rather than formal education, for an appeal to cossacks more personal qualities were required. Though voevodas might have other goals in mind than pacifying the rebels, cossacks were unlikely to obey every relative of a *razriad* voevoda sent to them, or a *pis'mennyi golova* just because of their rank or patronage ties.[312]

The Siberian chancellery recognised the necessity, though couching it in rather general terms. When in 1660 it was left to Tobol'sk voevoda I.A. Khilkov to decide whom to send to Nerchinsk in recently-acquired and heavily contested Dauria, it ordered to choose a

> "good Tobol'sk *syn boiarskii*, who has attended to the sovereign's affairs [being a voevoda or a *prikazchik*; - C.W.] and who is experienced in Siberian service."[313]

A high level of cossack freebooting, and cossacks not recognising voevodas characterised this area on the Amur. Khilkov sent L.B. Tolbuzin, who had served as a *prikazchik* in Western Siberia. In 1686, his son led the highly motivated cossacks at Albazin, who long held out against the superior might of the Mandzhurian army.[314] When Tobol'sk *dvorianin*[315] Fedor Tutolmin, sent by the voevoda of Tobol'sk to investigate voevoda Bashkovskii's tenure, arrived in Krasnoiarsk in 1695 in the early

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[309] Aleksandrov, *Vlast'*, 322
[310] See the Remezov map of Irkutsk; Vershinin, *Voevodskoe*, 39
[311] RGADA f.1121 no.419 ll.18-25 (investigation)
[312] Vershinin, *Voevodskoe*, 38-9
[313] Ibid., 40-1
[314] Bakhrushin, S.V., *Ocherki po istorii kolonizatsii Sibiri v XVI i XVII vv.*, Moscow 1927, 167; Ogloblin, "Sorokina", 206, 210-1; Lantzeff, *Siberia*, 82
[315] In 1684, some *deti boiarskie* were granted the new rank of Siberian *dvorianin*, still not on equal footing with Moscow *dvoriane*: Lantzeff, *Siberia*, 63

days of the revolt, he met with Bashkovskii's fierce resistance. The annoyed Tutolmin suggested starving out Bashkovskii, while he himself spent the days in the hamlets surrounding the town living in cossacks' houses. He engaged in conviviality, arranging banquets for the elected *sudeiki*, thus strengthening his bonds with local cossacks to prepare for the final clash.[316]

The Siberian governor M.P. Gagarin was challenged in 1715 over his practices in assigning *deti boiarskie*, which the *fiskal* A. Filshin deemed exaggerated. Gagarin explained that *oklady* allotted were high since volunteers were needed for this rank and its extended obligations. During the investigation in 1718, Gagarin repeated

> "many were assigned for their services, and others are recruited from lower (cossack) ranks, for they are good and reasonable men to send for *iasak*-collection and other sovereign's affairs."[317]

However, the closeness of the *deti boiarskie* and other intermediary ranks to the cossacks could easily prove problematic for the chancellery or the *razriad* voevoda. Siberian *deti boiarskie* were rarely considered eligible for the post of a voevoda on a permanent basis, not least since most lived lives not too different from that of the cossacks. Loyalty proved difficult to impose: in 1640 the voevoda of Tomsk reduced several local *deti boiarskie* to foot cossacks to punish them for insubordination and gambling; as replacements he was forced to promote ordinary cossacks.[318]

Nevertheless, in case of confrontation many sided with the local voevoda to profit from his powers in assigning them to journeys to Moscow, to buy up grain for the cossacks' supply or to the lucrative posts of *prikazchiki* in the smaller forts.[319] Others felt left out, and supported the cossacks in rebellion, if not outright instigating them. In May 1695, after cracking down on the voevoda Bashkovskii and sealing his office, cossacks at Krasnoiarsk forced some of the more respected *deti boiarskie* and other high-ranking leaders to become their "elected judges". Not that they personally found fault with this idea, but they were often cautious enough to wait until they could prove they had been forced, and until someone they trusted could actually tell

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[316] Bakhrushin, *Krasnoiarsk*, 183
[317] Akishin, *Politseiskoe*, 13
[318] Vershinin, *Voevodskoe,* 41; Nikitin, *Sluzhilye*, 80-1; Ogloblin, *Obozrenie*, pt.I, 123, 135-6; Lantzeff, *Siberia*, 63
[319] Lantzeff, *Siberia*, 83

them first hand that the cossacks did not want to punish them. In ataman Mikhail Zlobin's case this was his son Ivan who travelled to the small fort Iasaulovsk where his father was *prikazchik*. The cossacks strongly advised him to ride back to town without hesitating, otherwise, they threatened, "messengers" (*posyl'shchiki*) would be sent to fetch him. On Krasnoiarsk square, he met *syn boiarskii* Grigorii Ermolaev, who in his own words had also been forced to come, and Konon Samsonov "with comrades, who crowded in the square".

After enlisting Zlobin to draft a petition, it was decided to elect leaders to replace the voevoda until the sovereign's decree reached town, to hold court between them, the cossacks, and to elect selectmen." To constitute their new administration, "the whole town" assembled on the square and elected "as judges" Ermolaev, Zlobin, *sotniki* Pospelov and Belianin, *piatidesiatniki* Muruev and Rostovets, and the *desiatnik* Timofei Potylitsyn; the latter was the representative of a sprawling and influential cossack family. The cossacks confirmed their election by swearing an oath and the ritual kissing of the cross obliging them to back Grigorii Ermolaev "with comrades" and "not to hand them over in any case".[320]

The *sudeiki* clearly were not the driving force of the rebellion; this role was reserved to *deti boiarskie* Samsonov, Trifon and Matvei Eremeev, Iarlykov and the ataman-brothers Tiumentsov. Iarlykov exerted his influence to save the life of one of the hated supporters of the voevoda working in the voevoda's office.[321] Thus the importance of the elective *sudeiki* was effectively de-emphasised, leaving the power with the cossacks. This motif, and frequent changes of the *sudeiki* were common in rebellions[322]; they are symptomatic of the position of *deti boiarskie* in the *Personenverband*. The *sudeiki* were collectively called "G. Ermolaev with comrades" – thus marking his authority as similar to a voevoda's, but as well his position as one among equals, since this expression cited cossack customs as well. The authority of campaign leaders was to prevail in this rebellion, at least over the authority of the administration, be this voevoda or *prikaznye liudi*, who suffered much from attempts to force them to witness the voevoda's misdemeanours.

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[320] Bakhrushin, *Krasnoiarsk*, 181
[321] Ibid., 180
[322] Pokrovskii, *Tomsk*, pp 277-320; Aleksandrov, *Vlast'*, 305-16, 322-6. See chapter V.

The Siberian chancellery tried to restrict access to the rank of *deti boiarskie*, yet it did not intend to raise the barriers between the cossacks and their leaders to a height that might render direct communication impossible. In everyday chancellery language, therefore, all of these men were called "servitors" (*sluzhilye liudi*) or, without any distinction, cossacks.[323] *Deti boiarskie*, for the sake of local influence, had to rely on the *Personenverband*, and comply with its rulings. Due to their intermediary status and their interests in trade,[324] some collaborated with voevodas antagonizing the *Personenverband*, while others derived special prominence from employing their patronage and kinship ties in Moscow and the *razriad* towns.

The Voevoda and the *Personenverband*

Voevodas arrived in Siberia as the principal representatives of the tsar. As far as the cossacks were concerned, they still had to prove their potential benefit to the *Personenverband*, or at least to a powerful fraction of the town's cossacks. They mostly appeared with little personal fame of their own and thus depended on the uncertain authority they derived from being sent by the tsar. Stressing their authority and status and translating it into a frontier context which was to a considerable extent beyond the influence of the Muscovite hierarchy, they brought their retinue of family members and household servants, which could consist of as many as thirty or, in the case of Tobol'sk, even sixty to seventy people, accompanied by plentiful supplies.[325] In their assigned town they usually faced much more numerous cossack groups. What is more, local knowledge was indispensable to run the official as well as the (semi-)illegal private business of the voevoda. To overcome initial alienation and lack of acceptance upon the arrival of a new voevoda, instructions stipulated calling the cossacks to the *s''ezzhaia izba*, the voevoda's office, literally the 'riding-together [meeting] house', read aloud the instruction they had received in Moscow, and listen to their grievances. To establish his leadership, one of the options a new voevoda had was to give them redress – he could investigate his predecessor's dealings and personal affairs, fine him and return anything taken illicitly to the claimants. Though this procedure should not be underestimated as an avenue of redress for the cossacks,

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[323] Vasil'ev, *Zabaikal'skie*, vol.I prilozh. 25; Ogloblin, ch. III, 101.
[324] On trade see chapt.II.
[325] Lantzeff, *Siberia*, 49

it could only in some cases help Moscow to recover losses due to larceny that had been agreed by cossacks and voevoda; the previous voevoda might simply leave before the new one arrived.[326] Cossacks could prevent this evasion by deposing and arresting him in time. They never needed more than an easy legal pretext.[327] The voevoda could challenge their superiority only if he won over substantial numbers or very influential members of the *Personenverband.* The latter could pose a problem, as elected leaders of the lower rank would fall from favour due to the *Personenverband*'s orientation towards its aims, if leaders acted against these aims. However, high-ranking wealthy nobles, who until the last quarter of the seventeenth century were sent to Tobol'sk, and sometimes to *razriad* towns, could violate the sovereign's interest, plunder the cossacks and the *iasak* people, and still rely on patronage ties. If challenged, as in the case of prince Egupov-Cherkasskii who faced an ambitious second voevoda not scared by the first voevoda's influence in Moscow, he could still buy out the cossacks, defy investigation and make the most of it.[328] Yet with the exception of Tobol'sk and to a much lesser degree the bigger frontier towns of Tomsk, Eniseisk and Irkutsk, the majority of the voevodas were not high-ranking boyars but petty nobles.[329]

The cossacks' numerical superiority was not so significant a factor in the remote territories of the northeast. Nomads of the steppe posed no threat in Iakutsk, which was too far removed from the frontier; relatively small garrisons could check local Yakut tribes. In the inhospitable northeast, all supplies had to be carried over hundreds of miles from Eniseisk and Irkutsk, while those willing to settle remained in the south. Cossacks could hardly live by trading nor could they supplement the provisions sent from other towns by the crops of their own plot, and were attracted mainly by the wealth in furs persisting to the end of the century. Hunger and scurvy were frequent and devastating, repeatedly decimating cossack numbers. *Deti boiarskie* in Iakutsk district were in a slightly different position than elsewhere in Siberia. *Deti boiarskie*, cossacks and the voevodas profited from the difficulties of control over this remote territory Moscow experienced – they could make better

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[326] Cf. Ibid., 53
[327] Aleksandrov, *Vlast'*, passim
[328] Ibid., 288
[329] Vershinin, *Voevodskoe*, "Prilozheniia"

money than elsewhere in Siberia, and were less threatened by investigations and punishment. In the far-flung territory of Iakutsk, most cossacks stayed in distant forts and *zimov'e*, where influencing the voevoda's decisions was impossible.[330] Smaller garrisons due to adverse conditions and distance from the frontier also meant that voevoda Golenishchev-Kutuzov and his entourage was probably not the only one to win the upper hand over cossacks. However in 1666 he faced a petition which was signed by all the cossacks living in the fortress of Iakutsk who early in the year were about to relieve their brothers in the scattered winter-huts of the district, only thirty-six men. The petition which started the investigation was handed in at a review – at the only time of year when at least a part of the cossacks were assembled in Iakutsk, the voevoda was forced to investigate allegations seriously.[331]

Cossacks accused not only the *deti boiarskie*, but also "no-names" (*bezymenniki*), who were sent as *prikazchiki* although they had no name and no merit from the *Personenverband* point of view: the cossacks accused them of bad leadership. *Syn boiarskii* Fedor Pushchin, one of the banned leaders of the rebellion of Tomsk in 1648 and hardly a no-name, was nevertheless without fortune in his new place. He did not command much authority among cossacks in Iakutsk, although he retained his rank of *syn boiarskii*; among other failures, he was accused of losing fifty cossacks when leading them to the Amur against his orders. He had been unable to find natives on the river Argun, and ran out of supplies. His cossacks left him, he said, when they tried to winter in a hut, to go to the Amur – then a major cossack aim– but most of them died of hunger there and at the hands of Chinese troops. The cossacks were enraged as they had to accept that the voevoda granted favours to men whom they did not accept as leaders, while their direct leaders, the *desiatniki* and *piatidesiatniki* were not considered. The latter were the most active proponents of these accusations.[332] Replying to cossacks' allegations, *syn boiarskii* Pavel Shul'gin claimed that the cossacks ignored the illicit distilling of liquor and brewing of beer by those cossacks who actually were assigned as *prikazchiki* – all *deti boiarskie* and "*bezymenniki*" were accused of similar activities – "because he was their brother-

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[330] Lantzeff, *Siberia*, 83
[331] Ogloblin, "Iakutskii", 375-7
[332] Ibid., 379, 383

cossack". The accused cossacks could say little more than their foes to defend themselves against these claims.[333] Semen Epishev, another defendant, backed these counter-allegations with a detailed report and explanation of his own alleged misdemeanours, while also accusing the cossacks of similar feats. While cossacks and *deti boiarskie* were equally at fault in Iakutsk[334], it was the dissociation of leadership, position and profit that so enraged the cossacks and their immediate leaders; a situation so extreme was only possible in this territory.

While collecting the *iasak*, cossacks could be checked by the *prikazchik* making common cause with the *iasak* people. This could happen in Irkutsk and other places as well – Barguzinsk cossack Khariton Evdokimov sued *syn boiarskii* Gerasim Turchaninov, who was said to have ordered the *iasak*-paying Tungus to beat up his cossacks in a winter-hut. Cossacks were not the only ones who suffered during the dangerous business of collecting the *iasak*. Besides the *iasak* people, who sometimes endured atrocities, the *prikazchiki* themselves were under peril. Evdokimov raised his charge after Turchaninov accused him of inducing his cossacks to rebel against the *prikazchik* of Angarsk fortress in 1687/1688. *Prikazchik* Moisei Viazmin did not agree to divide the sovereign's fur treasure among them "according to cossack custom" ("*po tebe*"); Evdokimov's cossacks hung him with his legs in the smoke of the *zimov'e* until he acquiesced. However, Khariton's cossacks could not get away easily with their insubordination, they were fined in Irkutsk.[335] The balance of power between the voevoda and the cossack *Personenverband* therefore mattered, since it defined who could profit from the *iasak* collections.

For the petty nobles who made up the bulk of voevodas, the motives for applying for a post in the smaller and middle towns included the pursuit of personal wealth, which they were not well advised to seek in some of the poorer towns like Pelym or Narym, as well as an improvement to their service record.[336] Most Siberian towns were on distant frontiers where a voevoda's initiative was generally appreciated. Campaigns were the original environment of the *Personenverband*. They presented a voevoda with a peculiar mixture of opportunities and problems. Iurii Tukhachevskii,

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[333] Ibid., 389
[334] Cf. ibid., 391
[335] RGADA f.1121 op.1 no.145 ll.60-62 (investigation)
[336] Vershinin, *Voevodskoe*, 48-55

a Tobol'sk *syn boiarskii*, longtime voevoda of Tara and later Mangazeia and descendant of an impoverished clan of Smolensk *shliakhtichi* banned to Siberia felt this predicament even after successfully leading his cossacks in 1641 against the Enisei Kyrgyz princelings. Although they had gathered rich booty, the cossacks suddenly abandoned him. From their point of view the aim of the campaign was attained, and the plans of the voevoda and Moscow were of no concern to them. They wanted as soon as possible to sell their *zipuny*, their "silken kaftans" as they called their prisoners, alluding to booty and trade opportunities;–a new fortress Tukhachevskii wanted to built on a frontier they were used to view as "their" *iasak* area could only bring unwelcome competition. It had been Tukhachevskii's strategy that enraged them – to pacify the Kyrgyz by being victorious, but never to allow the cossacks to defeat and plunder them completely. However, he had not reckoned with his cossacks, whose leaders did not spare him on several occasions with their very urgent and timely advice. Having their booty on them, they finally left him claiming they had to find supplies in the fortress of Kuznetsk. Significantly, the cossacks of different towns involved in this campaign had formed a *Personenverband* by pledging to stand fast to their own campaign aims before leaving Tomsk.[337] It was the anomy of the frontier region that made the *Personenverband* indispensable to Moscow and the voevodas. They had to acquiesce to the impenetrable and in principle unsubjugated *Personenverband* that offered the basis for establishing a political space in which cossacks could negotiate the terms and conditions of their actions. Cossacks could not be interested in a settlement between Moscow and the nomadic tribes for the sake of this settlement; like the nomads, cossacks had a vested interest in keeping the window open rather than enclosing the sphere of Moscow's influence.

Conclusion

One clear distinction between cossack institutions and the *mir* is provided by the term *volia*: the runaway serf, displeased with his landowner, pressed hard by labour dues and his status binding him to his lord, began a new life of "freedom", which

[337] Rezun, "Pokhod", 67

meant a nomadic, boundless freedom, or "freedom plus space".[338] The cossacks in turn bound each other only at campaign times according to "consensus". This temporary character of bonds was later, especially in Siberia, partly removed. However, in the constant reprimands against holding circles – which presumably meant drinking as well – and the unruly behaviour some of this *volia* was always preserved, as opposed to the serfs' rigid division of the year into festival time and *strada*. To the cossacks, *strada* meant campaign, but on campaign in particular, unruly behaviour could only be restrained by submission to voluntary group aims and consensus. Furthermore, rebellions were not a return to *mir* practices, but to those of the cossack *Personenverband*: rather than exclusively electing one among their own, the measure of eligibility was a mixture of leadership qualities and the standing in the outside world, and both criteria could well mean that an outsider was preferred. Outsiders were not automatically excluded, which was a typically cossack feature at odds with the peasant world, where "*ne nash* (not our man)" was a damning judgement in the tightly-knit and interdependent community.[339] By contrast, Siberian cossacks never excluded cossacks from other towns from the circles just on account of their mere *otherness*, which was all the more at odds with *mir* practices since towns could be in harsh competition. Nevertheless, since the *Personenverband*'s aims were related to a specific campaign and its exclusiveness set in after the initial consensus only, they could even call a boyar "*nash*" and obey him as their campaign leader or for the sake of other enterprises, if they were pleased by his politics. They could also include *guliashchie* and *promyshlenniki* into their *voisko* if campaign aims demanded this.[340] Thus, it is doubtful whether cossacks can be addressed as a separate estate – although at times inclined to promote their own kin, the *Personenverband* recruited new members *ad hoc* if necessary, and was very capable of absorbing them if they set out for campaign. In this way, *promyshlenniki* could earn the right to be considered eligible for service. Since the families of the first settlers were all but separate according to estate, recruits could rely on their kin as advocates among the cossacks. The attempts of the government to limit the

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[338] Hosking, *Russians*, 18
[339] Ibid., 17
[340] See p.58. RGADA f.214 kn.1619, passim (investigation).

number of servitors and actually expel former peasants or *posadskie* were doomed wherever manpower was needed.[341] This meant that the potential for rebellions represented by the newly recruited cossacks was highest in the east of Siberia, or wherever the process of conquering and defending new territory was still in full motion. This pattern is at odds with any institution of settled people. It illustrates how nomadic ways of life were closely interwoven with settled patterns in the reality of Siberian cossack life in the seventeenth century. It is not necessary to refer excessively to backwardness, administrative arbitrariness and all-embracing central and voevoda power to explain why institutions of European Russia like the *volost* or the separate *zemskaia izba* of the *posad* were largely absent from Siberia, and why the voevodas had a central position.[342] The *Personenverband* replaced or, in the latter case, needed and controlled them by custom, which the Tobol'sk archbishops institutionalised and the tsar endorsed.

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[341] Nikitin, *Sluzhilye*, 76-7; Aleksandrov, *Vlast'*, 152-3
[342] Lantzeff, *Siberia*, 47

Chapter II The Economics of Siberian Service

During the first half of the seventeenth century government forces and private hunters probed ever deeper into the scarcely populated forests, mountains, swamps and open steppe of Northern Asia. At the same time, the government increasingly felt the main dilemma of fur-tax politics: how could Moscow maintain a suitable organisation guaranteeing its share of precious furs in a territory so huge and wild it was essentially uncontrollable? The prolonged frontier, which merchants and fur transports had to travel along for thousands of miles while being within reach of nomad assaults exacerbated this problem. One of the instruments available to achieve an organisation capable of providing the necessary security was *zhalovan'e*, translated as remuneration, reward or salary. It was paid upon receipt of a petition handed in by the cossack individually or collectively by a *desiatka* at the voevoda office. Each cossack was entitled to an *oklad* or allowance. Yet payment of *zhalovan'e* was delayed if cossacks did not appear to claim it. The voevoda decided when the amount was paid and on what conditions. He could also decide to pay an advance for up to three years if he considered the cossack reliable and his mission necessary. Additional monies were paid when cossacks travelled to Moscow: the daily *podennye deng'i* in Moscow, and a lump sum paid on departure.

Russian expansion in Siberia, from Ermak's conquest of the (Western-) Siberian khanate in 1581/82 to the establishment of Okhotsk on the Pacific seaboard in 1648, was intrinsically linked to *zhalovan'e*. Historians have explained this speed by geopolitical factors. The convenient river system allowed the crossing of enormous distances throughout the whole continent by boat. From the mid-fifteenth century onwards an increasing demand for luxury goods, especially costly furs such as sable and marten was created by the prosperity and pomp of Renaissance Europe. Muscovy's ability to provide them was unrivalled until the latter half of the seventeenth century.[343] The Western provision of the muskets Muscovy needed for its wars as well as supplying the cossacks in Siberia with superior weapons, were among the favourable conditions that made the fur trade feasible. In Asia, turmoil following the downfall of the last successors of the Mongol empire secured an

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[343] Forsyth, *Peoples*, 40

auspicious environment for Russian expansion. The conquest of the khanate of Kazan' in 1552 opened the way to Northern Asia. Political instability in Eurasia included civil war among the steppe khanates, which resulted in shaking off lesser nomad confederations into Romanov or Manchu dependency. War wrecked the Turkic khanates of Khiva and Bukhara, and combined with dynastic change in China to disrupt commerce and life in the oasis emporia on the trade routes from China.[344]

Yet one factor has been dealt with rather superficially, if at all: how did a cash-strapped economy manage to make such efficient use of all these opportunities – even if it was desirable and physically possible to reach Tobol'sk within three months by boat, or Irkutsk within nine months, it was still necessary to finance such an enterprise. *Zhalovan'e* emerged as a convenient solution to these linked problems of financing and administration, since it allowed for the conveying of information about the current state of the affairs as well as negotiations between centre and periphery.

Yet the actual practices of *zhalovan'e* show that emphasis was not put exclusively on its use as an instrument for disciplining unruly cossacks:[345] *Zhalovan'e* was to a high degree negotiable. From early on, Moscow stressed reliability in the delivery of salaries for Siberian cossacks. The tsar and the Siberian chancellery were in no position to neglect these salaries – Muscovy's logistic efforts in wartime depended crucially on the Siberian treasure. Furs were the principal commodity of foreign exchange, providing the means for purchasing goods from abroad which Russia lacked, such as precious metals, textiles, firearms, lead, sulphur, tin etc. A procession of boyars carrying huge bundles of forty sable pelts each, caused astonishment at the court of the German emperor Rudolf II in 1595. This huge gift of Siberian furs, a contribution to the war against the Ottoman Turks, was valued at 400,000 roubles. Between 1585 and 1680 the total number of sables and other valuable skins obtained in Siberia amounted to tens of thousands per year, reaching a peak of over 100,000 in the 1640s. Their value in Moscow (which was considerably less than the prices they fetched on the foreign markets) constituted about ten per cent of the state's

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[344] Penrose, "Influences", 361

[345] Astapenko, Mikhail, *Istoriia kazachestva Rossii.* vol.1/2: *Donskoe kazachestvo*, Rostov-na-Donu 1998, 107

income.[346] The resources of the *taiga* made the Russian empire the unrivalled supplier of furs to European and Asian markets until the eighteenth century. Even after Canada arrived as a competitor, it could not match the Siberian sable, supplying beaver as its highest priced commodity.[347]

The sable, with its dark colour and luxurious texture, commanded the highest price, followed by the black fox and the marten. A single hunting or trading trip resulting in the possession of a few pelts could make a Russian prosperous for life – however in case of failure, it could also throw him into the claws of indentured labour.[348] Enormous distances made seekers of wealth look for secure forms of travelling and financing their adventures. It was this security that state organisation could provide.

Competition for furs was stiff – as in the Californian gold-rush in the nineteenth century hunters and merchants streamed into Siberia, set up small bases in the austere regions on the Gulf of Taz near the Arctic Sea, where they initially operated independent of the government, their supply routes during the Time of Troubles beyond Moscow's reach. Initially, merchants and hunters even called on the native Samoyeds to defeat Muscovite troops arriving in 1601 with orders to found the town of Mangazeia and take control of the region.[349] Further south, closer to the steppe, frontier conditions placed Moscow in a more advantageous position from the start. In these areas, which also provided the best routes for trade and the only arable land available beyond the Urals, forays of the nomad Kalmyks and the eastern Mongols, the claims of members of the partly expelled, partly co-opted Western-Siberian Tatar dynasty, and the defensive tactics of expansion on the frontier made military organisation and fortifications indispensable. In frontier conditions it was hard to grow the necessary grain, the basis of Russian fare and an attraction to everyone in the vicinity of the steppe.[350] Control of grain supplies was thus a prerequisite for a position of power, causing many conflicts. Yet given the opportunities Siberia

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[346] Fisher, *Trade*, 109-19, 122

[347] Eccles, W.J., *The Canadian Frontier 1534-1760*, New York 1969, 26; Innis, H.A., *The Fur Trade in Canada*, Newhaven 1930, 33-4, 77, Fisher, *Trade*, 33-4; Forsyth, *Peoples*, 40-1

[348] Forsyth, *Peoples*, 40; Fisher, *Trade*, 29

[349] Rezun, "Pokhod", 66-7; Belov, M.I., *Mangazeiia.*, 2 pts., Leningrad 1980, here pt. 1, 33-5, 67, 109-12; Bakhrushin, S.V., "Puti v Sibir v XVI-XVII vv.", in idem, *Trudy* vol.III pt. 1, 72-111

[350] Smith, Robert E., *Bread and Salt*, Cambridge 1984

offered to accumulate wealth, Moscow could not confine itself to the narrower approach it took to its European southern frontiers – there, a policy of lean management meant that fortresses had to stock their emergency grain reserves from the soldiers' own service dues.[351] Furs had to be extracted from an immense country, and, since supplies were scarce, had to be collected by small, vulnerable groups, and then brought safely to Moscow, therefore the Siberian chancellery was prepared to pay a price. The best forces available for such a business were those otherwise most likely to rob transports – cossacks provided the highest degree of security possible in small groups due to their *Personenverband* structure. To oblige cossacks, much earlier than in other parts of Russia, perhaps with the exception of the capital, Moscow went to great lengths to organise a reliable and permanent system to ensure reliable provisioning.

Already in the sixteenth century, Muscovite governments had been conscious that the availability of food was indispensable to ensure the frictionless functioning of society. Distributions began as infrequent and intermittent payments from the tsar's household to individuals. By the early seventeenth century, however, grain distribution had acquired a more organised and predictable character. Much of the central bureaucracy in Moscow was maintained on a regular basis from the tsar's own holdings, and the musketeers, members of the lower service classes, received payments intended for food purchase. A limited number of supply wagons, filled with grain from the tsar's demesne lands, followed troops on campaigns where men with cash allowances could buy food. During emergencies, the tsar's private granaries also distributed food in the capital, as in the 1601-3 famine. Finally, the government frequently fixed grain prices on certain delimited markets. These efforts remained small in scope, sporadic, and decentralised well into the seventeenth century. The bureaucracy and the musketeers were still limited in size during the early 1600s, the army in European Russia prior to mid-century was substantially self-supporting, and urban populations had declined from their pre-1600 size.[352] Even when after mid-century army reform under tsar Alekscі began to create a larger

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[351] Stevens, *Soldiers*

[352] Eaton, H.L., "Decline and Recovery of Russian Cities from 1500 to 1700", *CASS* (1977 Summer), 220-52

dependent population, the Russian government did not recognise the need to organise additional provisioning. Only when the size of its army had doubled and the numbers of new formation troops had vastly increased did supply become an important element of the military reforms.[353]

More relevantly, these conditions remained confined to central Russia: Southern musketeers did not receive the payments Moscow owed them on paper, although the South was obliged to pay the related tax, musketeers' grain. National supply did not function in the south throughout the century, unsurprisingly given early-modern conditions. Therefore, isolated fortress towns in the south organised their own localised system of emergency food supply. However, these local granaries distributed their grain only if the besieged could no longer access the fields the service men were to serve from. As late as 1650, the military governor of Boboriko in the extreme southwest demanded outside supplies since with the next siege, people would die of starvation. Small towns, distant from any trade that regularly brought in grain, themselves produced trifling amounts. In the first years of settlement the opening of the steppe and forest land was onerous, and most of the new farmers were also military men, whose farming time was limited by their military duties. Their plots of land were often small, and there was little labour besides their own with which to work it. Even after the lands were open, bad harvest years were frequent, and farms lying outside fortress walls were vulnerable to hostile attack. Furthermore, granaries collected grain as service dues – both their clients and contributors were locals and largely the same individuals.[354]

Overall, therefore, Moscow had the system of new fortresses guarding central Muscovy built and maintained on the cheap.[355] The situation of Siberian fortress towns guarding access to trading routes and fur suppliers was very different. Tomsk may serve as a point of reference, since it was located in a similar environment, far to the southeast from the main area of peasant settlement in Western Siberia around Tobol'sk. As in many of European Russia's southern towns it was an exposed

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[353] Stevens, *Soldiers*, 43; Plavsic, Borivoj, "Seventeenth-Century Chanceries and their Staffs", in: Walter McKenzie-Pintner (ed.), *Russian Officialdom*, 19-45, Chapel Hill/N.C. 1980, here: 37; Hellie, Richard, *Enserfment and Military Change in Muscovy*, Chicago 1971, 163, 271; Smith, Dianne, "Muscovite Logistics, 1462-1598", *SEER* 71 (1993), no.1, 35-65

[354] Stevens, *Soldiers*, 49

[355] Cf. the lower Volga: Vodolagin, M.A., *Ocherkii istorii Volgograda*, Moskva 1968, 22

frontier town, finding it difficult to produce its own grain in sufficient quantities. Trade did not bring in enough grain, and market prices sometimes soared around twelve to fifteen roubles per quarter.[356] Yet from soon after Tomsk's foundation in 1604 the government, in a significant shift from its policies on its own defensive belt south of Moscow, was ready to provide grain over enormous distances to Tomsk as well as to most Siberian towns. More often than not, cossacks received their grain remuneration. Tomsk was vital for the fur trade as an outpost organising and equipping campaigns to the river Enisei, Iakutia and Eastern Siberia in general.

Northern Russian towns collected grain for Siberia, since they also profited from the fur trade with Siberia. During the years of food shortage in the Time of Troubles, when cossacks left their families to make a living in war-ridden European Russia, cossacks roaming the Muscovite countryside signed contracts with the *mir* of northern towns on "grain and money *zhalovan'e*";[357] despite the term used in the documents, this was close to the alimentation practiced between communities and officials.[358]

After the Time of Troubles, when supplies slowly resumed former levels, cossacks sought to secure an alternative source of income. As their numbers grew, and pressures on the supply-side of grain delivery augmented, the cossacks hid their new hamlets and lands from Moscow's vigilant eyes. As early as 1623, the Siberian chancellery, concerned about the drain on resources, promoted reform of the grain delivery system, since, as the decree proclaimed,

> "this is a heavy burden on northern [European Russian] towns and villages and many are deserted, the inhabitants have fled".[359]

The tsar's father Filaret sent his protégé boyar Iurii Ia. Suleshev to Tobol'sk with a warrant to sort out Siberian supplies. Suleshev classified Siberian towns as either agrarian or non-agrarian, cossacks assigned to the latter receiving their full salaries, whereas the former had to accept reductions; some towns, such as Tara, suffered

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[356] Ogloblin, "Tomskii bunt", 230

[357] Shveikovskaia, *Gosudarstvo*, 219; Stanislavskii, A.L., *Grazhdanskaia*, 23-24, 31, 41, 105, 111, 127, 244-5. Cf. the practices of German mercenaries: Burschel, Peter, *Söldner im Nordwestdeutschland des 16. und 17. Jahrhunderts*, Göttingen 1994.

[358] On *kormlenie*, see chapter IV.

[359] Goehrke, Carsten, *Die Wüstungen der mittelalterlichen Rus'*, Wiesbaden 1968, 209; Pokrovskii, *Tobol'skii arkhiereiskii*, 172-4, here: l.125

from this categorisation. On the other hand, the cossacks benefited from reform since Suleshev legalised their land-holding rights. This balanced approach did not spare Suleshev from attempts to overthrow him[360], but overall his measures were implemented, making his endeavour an outstanding example of early modern administrative reform. Suleshev achieved major economies and was suitably rewarded. Institutional change at that scale is not an early-modern common place, but rather something achieved only where certain conditions were observed; even in Central Europe a law's implementation depended in many ways on the compliance and quite autonomous motivation of the subjects, which could be very different from the intentions of the sovereign.[361] A land survey conducted during Suleshev's period as Tobol'sk voevoda was the basis for reform in Siberia, which came earlier than in other parts of Russia. In southern European Russia such an endeavour proved too expensive; therefore in this region similar reforms were never undertaken.[362] Vershinin has cited Suleshev's reform as proof of the towering role he assigned to voevodas in Siberian politics.[363] However, at least as long as the *Personenverband* provided an organised basis, succesfull institutional change depended on the careful institutionalising more reliable boundaries according to comprehensible procedures as did Suleshev and Kiprian (ch.I), apparently depending also on conditions of economic prosperity. If cossacks had an incentive to use, or abuse these institutions, they had gained a firm foothold beyond the Urals. These conditions were partly or entirely absent in two other attempts at reform in Siberia: so, those of voevoda P.I. Godunov in Iakutsk, who lacked support when he attempted to introduce the less

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[360] Ibid., ll.331-333. The Tobol'sk archbishop's rights to supervise secular local administration adds to the main line of arguing in this thesis, but it is a sub-system that is not strictly necessary for explanation. See my planned article.

[361] Recent debate on the ability of the early modern state to enforce its norms is summarised by Landwehr, Achim, "'Normdurchsetzung' in der Frühen Neuzeit? Kritik eines Begriffs", *ZfG* vol.48 (2000) no.2, 146-62. Landwehr asserts that terms like "implementation" and "effectiveness" of ordinances and norms have been applied in a wholly unreflective way. See Raeff, Marc, *The Well-ordered Police-state*, New Haven 1983, 45. Landwehr combines both strands of the debate: the long-term effectiveness and middle range powerlessness of the state and the efficient resistance of the subjects. Based on a carefully-observed case study, he claims that the long-term effectiveness of state initiatives occurred through complex forms of dialogue between the subjects and various authorities in a process which could foster new regulations, and through the subjects' use of norms against the intentions of the sovereign. Norms and organisations for their enforcement gained weight when subjects used, and abused them. Landwehr, *Policey im Alltag*, Frankfurt/Main 2000.

[362] Pokrovskii, *Tobol'skii arkhiereiskii*, 237-8; Aleksandrov, *Vlast'*, 204; Nikitin, *Sluzhilye*, 104; Bakhrushin, "Voevody", 270-273. Stevens, *Soldiers*, 46-8

[363] Vershinin, *Voevodskoe*, 82-3

institutionalised dragoons instead of the well-established rights of the cossacks and at the same time to reduce salary significantly.[364] The attempts of O. Shcherbatyi in the 1640s in Tomsk will be discussed below.[365] Both reformers could also be deposed by the cossacks since, although they enjoyed considerable protection within their respective networks of patronage, the tsar did not afford the same overriding level of protection as to Suleshev. Despite the enormous distances from the centre, Siberia as an important source of revenue was treated much more like the central parts of Russia, with respect to cossack *zhalovan'e*; it can be compared to Moscow rather than to any other frontier – apart from Astrakhan, seen as an exception due to the Persian trade.[366]

In assessing actual payments recorded in local cashbooks N.I. Nikitin concludes that for about half a century from Suleshev's reforms to the economic crisis of the late 1660s – and the beginning of the drop in Siberian fur output – actual supply and deliverance of *zhalovan'e* in Western Siberia was more or less equal to entitlement for all but a few; the latter, for various reasons, usually did not apply for it.[367] Based on estimates of consumption valid in Siberia in the eighteenth century, Nikitin admits that grain *zhalovan'e* alone was sufficient to feed an unmarried cossack. Overall, however, he and other Soviet historians maintain that provisions were insufficient, since a family could not be fed on an ordinary foot cossack's salary.[368] Yet the estimated minimal consumption of Siberians he presents is based on accounts by travellers like the student S.P. Krasheninnikov. He received two years' money salary in 1739 on Kamtchatka for working for a scientific expedition, which was, as he said, "given the local prices, just enough to buy grain only, since one man needs twenty-five *pud* a year." Given the brevity of this statement, it is doubtful whether the same norm applied to seventeenth-century cossacks living in the same town for years, who usually cultivated a garden and kept cattle.[369] Another example for this "norm" are

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[364] Kopylov, A.N., *Sud'ba odnogo iz "pribylykh del" P.I. Godunova*, in: Russkoe naselenie Pomor'ia i Sibiri (period feodalizma), Moscow, 129-148

[365] See 226-7.

[366] Opposite conclusion: Nikitin, *Sluzhilye*, 195. On Astrakhan, see Golikova, *Ocherki ... gorodov*, 54-6.

[367] Nikitin, *Sluzhilye*, 137-8

[368] Leont'eva, *Sluzhilye*, 111, 141

[369] Nikitin, "Voprosu", 55-6; Aleksandrov, V.A., *Rossiia na dal'nevostochnykh rubezhach*, Moscow 1969, 151. In Tiumen' and Tara in 1700-01 livestock registered with the absolute majority of servitors. Even in the northern towns they held their own cows and other animals: Butsinskiy,

the newly-enlisted western Siberian cossacks in F.A. Golovin's army embarking in 1687 to defend the Amur against Chinese troops, who received two *pud* of flour a month. They hardly had anything to supplement their salary, depending on what was issued.[370] Nikitin gives a figure regularly paid to an unmarried cossack of 7 ½ - 9 ½ *chetverty* grain per annum, while a married cossack would receive 9 ½ -10 ½ in the "agricultural" towns, and married cossacks in towns positioned too far north for farming, such as Berezov and Surgut, received eleven *chetverty*. Okladnikov mentions an "official norm" of 2.5 - 3 *chetverty* for the rather long period of 1710-1795 on which Nikitin relies, with a *chetvert'* equalling 8 ½ rather than 4 ½ *pud*.[371]

A calculation of the nutritional value however – though very rough, and hardly an accurate reflection of the „real" value – yields astonishing results. Given the nutritional value of carbohydrates as four calories per gram, with eighty-seven percent of the grain being either carbohydrate or fat[372], follows rates of more than 3.48 kcal per kg grain. 36.6 kg per *pud*, four or 4 ½ *puds* per *chetvert'* and an assumed average of ten *chetverty* per family yields more than 5094 kcal or 1,463.8 kg grain p.a. for one family.[373] Assuming that a family with two children aged between nine and twelve needs 9,600 cal p.d. – 3,504 kcal p.a. (Okladnikov's norm equals 8,375 cal p.d., or 3,066 kcal p.a.; but it is unclear to how many persons this relates), even cattle could be fed on this diet. Now this perhaps overstates the nutritional value of grain *zhalovan'e*, as some loss occurred during processing, severe winter conditions and hard work increased intake, and in general this kind of computation can be far from everyday reality. Still, even in the "agricultural" towns the official ration was substantial, and hardly corroborates claims that a family could not feed itself on it.

Many of the qualifications Okladnikov made with regard to this "norm" need to be borne in mind: applicable to peasants, it was rather elastic. *Iasak* people and

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Zaselenie, 140; Ogloblin, *Obozrenie*, pt. II, 137; pt. 3, 228; Gol'denberg, L.A., *Semen Ul'ianovich Remezov*, Moscow 1965, 12; RGADA f.214 kn.1276, 1182; st.76 l.204; st.186 ll.154-155; st.8 l.90 (registration). Gagemeister, Iu.A., *Statisticheskoe obozrenie Sibiri*, St. Petersburg 1854, pt.II, 83.

[370] Andreev, A.I., *Ocherki po istochnikovedeniiu Sibiri*, Leningrad 1960-65, 151

[371] *Krest'anstvo Sibiri*, 191-2, 271. Given the latter *chetvert'* was equal to 8 pud, results 20-24 pud: Nikitin, *Sluzhilye*, 227 n.123; Shunkov, V.I., *Mery sypuchykh tel v Sibiri XVII v.*, in: *Akademiku B.D. Grekovu ko dniu semidesiatiletiia*, Moscow 1952, 167-71.

[372] According to Encyclopaedia Americana.

[373] Cf. Stevens, *Soldiers*, 9

promyshlenniki needed much less than this, and even the peasants themselves proved flexible enough to provide more for the market once fiscal pressure made this a favourable option – there were other means to live by. A German officer in Russian service expressed his astonishment and dismay about the Russians on arrival in Tobol'sk in 1667, at the very end of the period of relative wealth. He compared them either with -mercenaries in the German principalities or with European Russian cossacks:

> "The Russians in this part of the world deal with...fat and tasty fish caught in superabundance. They trade in different kinds of grain and other foodstuffs,...everyone aspires to be a merchant. There are diverse handicrafts,..., but no one wants to be a peasant, thus the rich land lies idle. Most of these people serve the tsar as...cossacks..., each of them receiving his travel-salary; that is why they...do not want to work, but rely on the general good bargain here, especially the wonderful fish."[374]

Though the unknown German officer vented his prejudices – his grasp of *iasak*-collection was all but non-existent, as he did not leave Tobol'sk – and underestimated nomad influence on agriculture, he was right as to the role fish played in the diet. Much fish was to be found in the Ob, Irtysh, Enisei, Amur, the lakes of the Western Transbaikal, and in lake Chan. Less fish lived in the Nerchinsk area and in the Lena.[375] In Tomsk, fish was so plentiful that – still in the 1730s – even on meat days people ate more fish than meat, although most cossacks reared cattle.[376]

Cossacks needed cash *zhalovan'e* to buy equipment and clothing, such as horses, saddles or muskets. Yet a married cossack with children could spend at least part of it on food. Certainly, *zhalovan'e* did not cover all the expenses of a family, and there were – rather infrequent – incidents of complaints by married cossacks. Yet the measure of "regularity" of *zhalovan'e* and the assumption that the Siberian Chancellery not only felt an obligation to feed the cossack and his wife, but a whole family[377] appears to be informed by contemporary notions. Indeed, comparisons with

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[374] Alekseev, *Beschreibung*, 17-18.
[375] *Krest'ianstvo Sibiri v epokhu feodalizma*, red. A.P. Okladnikov, Novosibirsk 1982, 33
[376] Emel'ianov, Nikolai F., *Gorod Tomsk v feodal'nuiu epokhu*, Tomsk 1984, 24; *S.P. Krasheninnikov v Sibiri*, Moscow 1966, 53-5; Vilkov, O.N., "Rybnaia torgovlia Tobol'ska XVII v.", *Voprosy istorii sotsialno-ekonomicheskoi i kulturnoi zhizni Sibiri*, Novosibirsk 1968, vol.1, 5-14
[377] Nikitin, *Sluzhilye*, 141

early modern European mercenaries, coming closest in status to the cossacks, suggest a different notion. German mercenaries in the Thirty Years War were as much victims as guilty parties in the destruction caused. Ordinary soldiers were swindled over pay, food, lodgings, and medicine both by officers and by civilians who profited from food shortages and pocketed money meant for the upkeep of troops.[378] While they were confined to the camp market and the sutler, and were not allowed to access towns and their markets at will, Siberian cossacks were town residents and could travel on duty to other market-places; they rebelled successfully when barred from the market-place, as in 1648 in Tomsk.[379] Even unmarried mercenaries in the German Empire found it hard to feed themselves on their salaries, even in the best of times, since weapons, equipment and additional foodstuffs had to be bought at exaggerated prices. They could not even think of supporting their wives and children, unless they earned something extra. The wretched and abject soldiers' wives, concubines and prostitutes stumbled on muddy roads behind the host, carrying heavy weights, begging their way through the country. Only at the very end of the seventeenth century, did states devote their attention to this problem. Long before this, Siberian cossacks had different, though related worries: Their wives, though eligible for increased *zhalovan'e* for married cossacks, were often left behind in town without any supplies during cossacks' distant journeys, since the men needed to carry whatever they could, seeking a good deal elsewhere.[380] For this reason, and since life in two separate places was more expensive, even the increased salary for married cossacks sometimes could not save their families from hunger. The Siberian chancellery, concerned about this problem as early as 1639, though not inclined to condone a second extra salary for married cossacks when on expeditions, decreed that one third of the salary had to be held back for wives. However, this decree was conducive to fraud – voevodas often tried to profit from the payment of salaries, holding back one third of the salaries of all cossacks, married or unmarried, and appropriating the rest for themselves. Cossacks complained about the practice in

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[378] Kroener, Bernhard, "Conditions de Vie et Origine Sociale du Personnel Militaire Subalterne", *Francia* vol.15 (1987), 321-50

[379] Burschel, *Söldner*, 181-2; Pokrovskii, *Tomsk*, 96

[380] See 128: the transactions of *syn boiarskii* Lonshakov. Burschel, *Söldner*, 241-55; Meumann, "Soldatenfamilien und uneheliche Kinder", in: Kroener, Bernhard (ed.), *Krieg und Frieden*, Paderborn 1996, 219-236.

petitions, and the decree was abolished in 1647 after a thorough investigation ordered by the tsar – further proof of the responsiveness and flexibility of the Siberian chancellery.[381]

Siberian cossacks had another profitable source of income. German mercenaries in the seventeenth century could not hope for a substantial share of ransom, since they were only allowed to demand ransom of prisoners of war of their own rank. Consequently, the greater part of ransom was swallowed up by the higher ranks; lowly mercenaries mostly could not pay any ransom at all, and even if by chance they had something to offer, their captors were only allowed to take as much as the amount of their own monthly salary.[382] In Siberia, however, the struggle between the Siberian chancellery and the cossacks over ransoming and enslaving their prisoners could not be won by either side, although enslavement meant huge losses to Moscow's revenues – it infringed upon the number of *iasak* payers, as cossacks did not refrain from campaigns against "peaceless" natives. Yet cossacks saw taking captives as their inalienable right, a point of view only strengthened by the fact that in Siberia, as everywhere along the steppe frontier, enslavement was seen as a traditional practice even before the Russians appeared. On several occasions, the Siberian chancellery tried to stem the tide, inter alia by forbidding the trade in captives and the enslavement of non-baptised natives. Thus at least it legally separated the spheres of the *iasak*-paying natives from legitimate transactions with cossacks' private economies. The natives lived their traditional and shamanistic ways, and would expel renegades. The success of these decrees, however, was limited.[383] In 1678/1679 the cossack Ivashko Ignat'ev, then *prikazchik* of Tunkinsk *ostrog* launched a successful campaign, returning with two male natives and two "*devki*". Despite reports received from Irkutsk, it was only six years later that the voevoda prince Shcherbatyi succeeded in laying his hands on Ignat'ev and interrogating him over what happened to the natives when he was sent to Eniseisk, beyond the reach of the local Irkutsk *Personenverband.* The Irkutsk *prikazchik* Pervyi Samoilov had reported on them in 1679/1680 when they were living in the

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[381] Lantzeff, *Siberia*, 79; Butsinskii, *Zaselenie*, 250-1
[382] Burschel, *Söldner*, 210-11
[383] Lantzeff, *Siberia*, 102-4

house of Irkutsk cossack Petr Studenitsyn "and comrades"; Studenitsyn was engaged in trade with Mongol nomads.[384] Only the fate of another native, known by his new Christian name of Timoshka, was known in detail. According to Ignat'ev's petition the next Irkutsk *prikazchik* Ivan Vlasov had handed young Timoshka to Ignat'ev, and this time the transaction was recorded. Notwithstanding Ignat'ev's remonstrations that he had just hired Timoshka out for ten roubles, he could not state the boy's whereabouts, or the date until which he had hired him out. Shcherbatyi found that Ignat'ev had pawned Timoshka for thirty roubles to Irkutsk *piatidesiatnik* Kozemka Fedorov, and claimed he did not even know where he lived by the time of his interrogation.[385] Studenitsyn's career likewise suffered no lasting setback, as he again went to Tunkinsk as *godovalshchik* receiving a year's *zhalovan'e* in advance and as elected *tseloval'nik* conveyed the fur treasury to Golovin's army at Nerchinsk in 1688.[386] For years, the *Personenverband* had provided sufficient cover for these illegal deals in slaves, as the local *prikazchik*, dependent on local society to a larger degree than the voevoda who was to be exchanged within two to four years, did not dare interfere with it.

Seeking cover in the *Personenverband* worked quite well particularly in the first period after the conquest of a region, when the hold of the voevoda administration was still remote and *prikazchiki* regarded themselves as not too far removed from the *Personenverband*.[387] Relatives could be inclined to pay ransom, thus trading slaves and asking for ransom made for a convenient source of income which cossacks openly regarded as an inalienable privilege, which they strove to protect from infringements.[388] While the government strove to limit these practices throughout the seventeenth century, it was the effects of overhunting and the decline of *iasak* that changed Moscow's priorities in the eighteenth century, when *iasyri* were increasingly owned openly.[389]

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[384] On Studenitsyn, see Chapter V; RGADA f.1121 op.1 no.1 l.96; no.35 l.60 (report); no.33 l.90 (investigation); no.67, l.120; op.2 no.74 (investigation)
[385] RGADA f.1121 op.1 no.67, ll.108-9 (decree, Eniseisk)
[386] Ibid., no.2, ll.21-2 (investigation); no.120 l.12 (receipt for fur transport)
[387] Okladnikov, *Ocherki,* 113-4
[388] Pokrovskii, *Tomsk*, 98-9
[389] Cf. Lantzeff, *Siberia,* 103

Conflict and Negotiation

The controversy caused by cases of fraud on deliverance of *zhalovan'e* tends to obscure the fact that in Siberia cossacks were in a good position to prevent such practices. Already in the 1620s, when the supply problems of the Time of Troubles were still not entirely overcome, which affected provisions for the cossacks, since they made up for most of a town's expenses, voevodas had to seek loans from local merchants and "all people".[390] Cossacks were in many cases in direct control of the supply of money, grain and salt. They were the only ones who could protect the long-distance transports from the European Russian North or Tobol'sk, even if a *syn boiarskii* was in charge. While inter-regional trade in grain was weak[391], the capabilities of the *Personenverband* provided the defensive strength necessary to protect transports, since more numerous troops could not be supplied. This position could prove strong enough to force the Siberian chancellery and the voevoda to make concessions on their plans for reforms. In 1637, after a commission had surveyed Tomsk cossack land, new regulations on *zhalovan'e* were introduced in the region. The Siberian Chancelllery, conscious of the burden supplies placed on the grain-growing regions of the European Russian North and the costs of transport, stipulated that cossacks who cultivated even small parcels of land should not receive *zhalovan'e* from the next year onwards. Instead, they would either "serve from their land" or receive a lower amount. The resultant rebellion focused on the arrival of the barges carrying the grain *zhalovan'e* from Tobol'sk. The voevoda, *stol'nik* prince Ivan Romodanovskii, tried to circumvent an explosive situation by keeping closely, if superficially, to legality. *Zhalovan'e* was paid out in full only for the preceding year and, according to custom, at the barges on the river quay. Romodanovskii ordered the cossacks to carry their allowance of grain for the coming year themselves, but not, as usual, to their home, but to the sovereign's granary.[392] The cossacks, queuing at the quay and already disturbed by the rapid introduction of the new law, protested and refused to comply.[393] Romodanovskii made clear they would

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[390] Nikitin, *Sluzhilye*, 117
[391] Stevens, *Soldiers*, 64
[392] Ogloblin, "Tomskii bunt", 235
[393] Aleksandrov, *Vlast'*, 247-8. Aleksandrov, V.A., "Narodnye vosstaniia v Vostochnoi Sibiri", *IZ*, vol.59 (1957), 272, 273

receive their *zhalovan'e* as soon as they had earned it, but no longer in advance. As they explained in a petition, the cossacks feared they would not receive their *zhalovan'e* or might have to pay bribes in future; indeed such a regime deprived them of their best opportunity to influence the levels and conditions of salary since issuing ceased to be a public event open to the pressures of the *Personenverband.* They were also quick to point out that Romodanovskii had ordered the *posad* people to carry a significant number of sacks to his private house and to those of several other persons under suspicion of collaboration with the voevoda, an allegation the mir of the *posad* corroborated in their own petition. However a different light is cast on the proceedings in the petition of the cossacks, which hints at earlier battles over the issuing of grain. Thus voevoda Egupov-Cherkasskii had delayed the issue for more than five weeks, they claimed, until the sudden appearance of ice on the "quick and stony" river Tom crushed the barges and the whole grain transport sank. After this catastrophe there should have been severe dearth, but the next voevodas, prince Ivan Romodanovskii and his colleagues managed to "offend and violate and insult" them even more. Arriving in 1635 the newcomers not only delayed issuing the grain, sorting it to retain the best for themselves while dealing out only "wet and rotten" grain, yet still there seemed to be reserves, since the voevodas also bought up the cossacks' allowances wholesale, as the latter admitted frankly in their petition.[394]

The protesters' less than desperate approach to the issue is apparent in their attitude towards tangible concessions the voevoda made to their cause. After the announcement of the new law and the determination of the voevoda not to pay out *zhalovan'e* in advance, the cossacks threatened to seize the barges, yet never did. In particular Ivan Matveev, the *desiatnik* who brought the transport from Tobol'sk to Tomsk "said many rude words to the voevoda and barked at him", as Romodanovskii put it. The voevoda reacted by imprisoning seven of the ringleaders, all of them *piatidesiatniki*, with the help of some of the *deti boiarskie*. However, he had not taken into account the resolution of ordinary cossacks: 150 men "went into prison forcefully and imprisoned themselves" to join their leaders; they did not allow their names to be listed and followed their leaders to the *prikaznaia izba* when the latter

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[394] Ogloblin, "Tomskii bunt", 241

were summoned, a common tactic.[395] Romodanovskii reported that the cossacks reproached him:

> "whatever the host orders, so it will be: [we] will not carry the sovereign's grain nor will [we] serve from [our] fields without grain *zhalovan'e*."

After another attempt at separating the *piatidesiatniki* from their *Personenverband* had failed, and in town the signs of rebellious spirit could not be overlooked – the voevoda reported:

> "They [the cossacks] assembled circles and gave advice and instigated some unknown crimes concerning the sovereign's and someone else's affairs."

Romodanovskii tried to divide his foes by a calculated partial retreat. He offered to hand out the grain *zhalovan'e* for the next year (1638/1639) straight away to those who were entitled to receive it according to the new regulations. The rebels, however, did not even react to this offer:

> "They had all convened at that time in the refectory of the church of the Resurrection, for deliberation".[396]

Considering that the cossack petition claimed an earlier voevoda had withheld the grain on the barges until early and sudden ice on the river Tom sank them, such endurance hardly confirms that they felt the consequences of their refusal heavily. Nor did the poor make a romantic sacrifice in the interest of their "*mir*"; a term which was not even mentioned at this stage, or at almost any stage of the rebellion.[397] The cossacks still had enough reserves at their disposal, and knew in particular they had untapped resources for their political bargain. The *Personenverband's* firm stance over the distribution of *zhalovan'e* explains why, among the abuses uncovered by investigations, there were few occasions in which cossacks were outmanoeuvred with regard to the payment of their salary.[398]

Tempting as it may be to compare this rebellion to the grain and bread riots in England described by Thompson and his followers as part of a moral economy, serious differences remain. English rioters, relying on an eroded body of statutory and customary law responded to dearth by the reintroduction of market regulations,

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[395] Ibid., 230. Cf. similar events in 1641: Rezun, "Pokhod", 51
[396] Ogloblin, "Tomskii bunt", 240-1
[397] Ibid., 239
[398] Nikitin, *Sluzhilye*, 135-7

and did not abstain from seizing merchants' barges on the rivers and selling them "at their price" in the market place.[399] The rebels in Tomsk, however, despite a similar opportunity did not attempt to take the sovereign's salary by force. They sent a delegation with their petition to Moscow, to persuade the Siberian chancellery not to reform. As petitioners sent on a distant journey, they felt entitled to seize their *zhalovan'e* directly from the barges for a year in advance.[400] The *Personenverband* was fully prepared to disobey the voevoda – who was entitled to withhold a safe-conduct[401] – yet would rather negotiate through its delegates with the chancellery in distant Moscow than simply seize the barges on the grounds of claimed rights.

The rebellion's outcome was close to a full vindication of this strategy. With the participation of one of the later leaders of the rebellion, Andrei Guba, a complete overview of cossack land had only just been filed as a preparation for reform, yet under the threat of rebellion the Siberian chancellery decided the land should be reinspected. At least for now, the new law on service from the land was not to be applied.[402]

The cossacks used the same strategy of exploiting the trade bottleneck formed by the frontier town in other events, too. In 1645-6 Tomsk cossacks demanded – "as a pretext" for not being ready to leave for campaign, as Bakhrushin believed – an advance of two years on their allowances for a campaign against the Buryats who were threatening Krasnoiarsk, when voevoda O.I. Shcherbatyi ordered two hundred cossacks to be elected from their ranks. They declared that Krasnoiar cossacks were guilty of

> "provoking skirmishes with the Buryats…due to their limitless greed."[403]

The delay caused by these negotiation tactics meant serious danger for Krasnoiarsk. However, for Bakhrushin this was but quarrelling between the voevoda and the voevoda of the *razriad*, seeing the former as supporting the interests of the cossacks.[404] Yet this is to view the events in isolation. In 1648 the same happened

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[399] Thompson, E.P., "The Moral Economy of the Crowd", in: idem, *Customs in Common*, London 1991, 200. Randall, Adrian (ed.), *Moral Economy and Popular Protest*, London 2000. I am indebted to Roger Bartlett for pointing out this potential comparison.

[400] Ogloblin, "Tomskii bunt", 240

[401] On petitioning, see chapt.III.

[402] Ogloblin, "Tomskii bunt", 251

[403] Chistiakova, E.V., *Gorodskie vosstaniia v Rossii*, Voronezh 1975, 209

[404] Bakhrushin, "Krasnoiarsk", 153-4.

again when voevoda Shcherbatyi argued that the system of paying *zhalovan'e* once a year was detrimental, so he paid only half the *oklad* once at a time.[405] When he sent another two hundred cossacks on the urgent demand of the Krasnoiarsk voevoda Durnovo, he triggered the long-lasting rebellion discussed above.[406]

The Krasnoiarians meanwhile remained a poor lot. Rivalry between Eniseisk and Krasnoiarsk started with the foundation of the latter by Eniseisk voevoda Andrei Dubenskii, who built the fortress "by his own volition, not according to the sovereign's decree", as Eniseisk cossacks believed. While Eniseisk cossacks were burdened with shipping supplies from Makovsk fortress, cossacks in both fortresses soon became rivals over the Buryat territories, since Krasnoiarsk was blocked to the south by the Kyrgyz and by mountains and rapids to the east. When a Krasnoiar host, after collecting *iasak* and fighting in Buryat territory in 1629, had to return from the Angara via Eniseisk, cossacks there obliged their voevoda to confiscate their *iasyr'* since they had fought in peaceful and obedient territories. Eniseisk handled supply as well and the voevoda had already refused to advance *zhalovan'e* for this campaign, although the Krasnoiarians had besieged Eniseisk.[407] At the turn of the 1680s and 1690s, it was again this southern outpost bypassed by most of the trade and surrounded by steppe that was insufficiently supplied: Krasnoiarsk reliably received *zhalovan'e* only in years of service journeys. Even voevoda Musin-Pushkin complained that already thirty cossacks had fled and more would follow if compensation were not paid out, since they were all indebted and could not pay their creditors.

However Krasnoiarsk cossacks themselves knew well that:

> "In other Siberian towns, sovereign, the servitors are granted your sovereign's...salary in advance for a whole year, while all of us...receive...salary [only] for the bygone years, but in advance they do not give us [anything]. We have also received no grain salary for several years." (1647)[408]

Krasnoiarians could not offer the same amount of *iasak* other towns collected, since the steppe yielded much less valuable furs than the forests. Bakhrushin's

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[405] Aleksandrov, *Vlast'*, 202; Pokrovskii, *Tomsk*, 171, 176; cf. Nikitin, *Sluzhilye*, 125.
[406] Chistiakova, *Vosstaniia*, 220; idem, "Tomskoe vosstanie 1648", 81
[407] Okladnikov, *Ocherki*, 50, 55
[408] Bakhrushin, *Krasnoiarsk*, 75-6

figures show that the main problem in the early 1690s was not the general low level of *zhalovan'e*, but rather the fact that over several years, a huge sum of delayed payments had accumulated, so reliability of salary was no longer guaranteed: in 1692/1693 it amounted to 11,404 roubles for the last six years. In addition to their isolation Krasnoiarians had clear material motives to doubt their superiors' loyalty. These suspicions could only have been confirmed, and were directed towards the voevodas and investigators when a reward granted by the tsar for a successful campaign was withheld in 1695; a heavy drought and famine contributed to the combustible situation in Krasnoiarsk on the brink of the rebellion, which lasted until 1698.[409]

Manipulation of supplies was one of the major devices by which *Personenverbände* of different towns competed. Significantly, it was not the cossack *Personenverband* that shed light on a plot in Tobol'sk involving forged weights and a regular issuing of shortweight grain provisions to cossack detachments; Tobol'sk was the major entrepôt for shipments to the north, south and east, receiving supplies directly from European Russia. The affair was uncovered by the litigation of *pod'iachii* Savva Kliapikov, who had been imprisoned by voevoda P.I. Pronskii to silence him. Although he had served for thirty years in Tobol'sk, he had been excluded from the company of those profiting from the forgeries. In his detailed bill of complaint, Kliapikov claimed that the ordinary cossacks had supported him against the voevoda's false advisers. While the archbishop of Tobol'sk, returning from a long sojourn in Moscow, managed to release the renegade *pod'iachii*, he could not assemble sufficient support among cossacks for a local investigation into the affair, which had already lasted a decade. In the end the undersecretary Kliapikov was brought to Moscow, where the tsar assigned an investigation uncovering massive evidence of administrative malpractice.[410] As will be argued in chapter V, Irkutsk cossacks behaved similarly. A string of more populous administrative centres, from Tobol'sk over Eniseisk to Irkutsk, therefore, commanded supplies and increased their fortunes at its expense, as the military situation allowed. These towns included the poorly-endowed Tomsk, which, however, marshalled a huge garrison

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[409] Ibid., 179

[410] Aleksandrov, *Vlast'*, 115, 132, 134, 154, 155, 371, 373; Pokrovskii, "Slovu", 38-40, 44-5

and was important as a point of departure for campaigns; and Iakutsk, where different circumstances meant that the voevodas could unilaterally withhold part of the supplies. Supplies were more generous in the north and other regions unsuitable for agriculture, as in Berezov, Surgut or Nerchinsk[411], where conditions demanded this; however the rich fur yields in these regions or other reasons, such as the performance of functions essential for trade also gave the tsar opportunities to display his largesse.

Some historians consider *zhalovan'e* as merely a tool in Moscow's hands to trick the cossacks into dependency "from the very beginning of the conquest", which allowed the metropolis to regulate the internal life of the cossack periphery.[412] However, such a model of absolute control is belied by events such as the Achinsk campaign and its preliminaries, which also shows the extent to which Siberian cossacks exploited the state.[413] In 1641 Moscow attempted to open up the land-route between the southern outposts of Tomsk and Krasnoiarsk by establishing the *ostrog* Achinsk on the Chulym River. On this occasion, cossacks showed how little inclined they could be to follow government decrees, despite receiving appropriate *zhalovan'e*, if orders contravened their interests. Iakov Tukhachevskii, assigned to this campaign as voevoda, led a host drafted from several Western Siberian towns which was planned to comprise one thousand cossacks, a number it never reached. They were all to meet in Tara, where the *zhalovan'e* for one year had already arrived in the spring and summer of 1639. The first delay occurred when cossacks from Tobol'sk claimed their salaries for the preceding year – yet deliveries had already gone to Iakutsk, and there was nothing left in Tobol'sk to placate them. In a petition the cossacks complained their horses were weak and not fit to endure a long campaign; grain supplies, they maintained, had not yet arrived, while their equipment and winter clothes were not sufficient.[414]

At the same time those cossacks who slackly transported grain and asserted that they had become bogged down near Narym, nevertheless had made their way to

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[411] Nikitin, *Sluzhilye*, 106, 227
[412] Astapenko, *Istoriia*, 107
[413] The following relies on a reinterpretation of Rezun, "Pokhod", which is to my knowledge the only historiographic account of these events.
[414] Rezun, "Pokhod", 47

Tomsk. In town, they immediately claimed in a petition that they had travelled "hungry and needy", and in Tomsk "they rove from one homestead to the next" and "finally die". It is striking that the cossacks who wrote this served and lived in Tomsk.[415]

While Tukhachevskii used the hold-up to make further observations on the region, supplies from Tiumen', which were meant to replace those from Tobol'sk, met an apparently similar fate when they froze while taking the wrong way. Tukhachevskii was quick to point out that this snag proved that some cossacks "do not want to serve you, sovereign". He asserted that Tobol'sk *sotnik* Ivan Rukin, a descendant of a sprawling family of wealthy cossacks in Surgut, Narym and Tomsk, who was influential among cossacks in Tobol'sk, initiated acts of sabotage. On a recent service journey to Moscow he had learned of the details of Tukhachevskii's plan; back in Siberia he claimed there was no official decree backing this campaign. He therefore sent his cossacks back to Tobol'sk with the supplies they had escorted before they even reached Tara. In Tomsk, cossacks petitioned for compensation – a particular example of soft sell on their part: They depicted a truly apocalyptic situation. On their way to Tara, they claimed,

> "many of us lost their horses, while others were lamed, and many of us arrived on foot".
>
> But since
>
> "we do not want to desert your sovereign's service...we indebted ourselves to one another in the circle [*v kruga druga*] and bought [foodstuffs and horses] at a good bargain...and on our way to the town of Tomsk we...rode to the Baraba [steppe] and...exchanged two horses for one and gave our last clothes; many of us with difficulty reached the town of Tomsk on foot,...hungry and cold, naked and barefoot and were left without horses, and the salary which had been sent to us from Tobol'sk...drowned in the river while others did not reach us [...] and froze...and while we were in Tomsk...we roved from one homestead to the next and died of starvation...".[416]

However much hyperbole was involved, Moscow did not think twice about ordering Tomsk granaries to dole out grain *zhalovan'e*. Since the granaries were empty, the cossacks asserted, Tomsk voevoda Klubkov-Masal'skii ordered the collection of four quarters per campaigner from all the people in Tomsk. Only then

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[415] Ibid., 47; Ogloblin, *Obrozrenie*, pt.1, 205, 279
[416] Rezun, "Pokhod", 52-3

did the cossacks sluggishly prepare for campaign, but they still waited to receive their cash allowance. Despite all efforts to fit them out for campaign, the cossacks claimed that

> "we borrowed from each other...and set out for the sovereign's service...in great want...",

but then petitioned and waited again, this time for the arrival of the delayed cash and grain salary for the preceding year, sent from Tobol'sk.[417] All claims of the cossacks notwithstanding, the Tomsk voevodas, who in those years had to appease a rebellious attitude in their own town and were therefore hardly leaning towards Tukhachevskii, while denying all claims as to contributions collected among the population, reported that granaries had issued 456 quarters of rye; Tukhachevskii confirmed this version and explained:

> "In their petition they wrote treacherously that they do not want to serve you, although the arrears have been sent from Tobol'sk: rye, groats, oatmeal and salt,...[and there is also] ham, butter and cheese...but that their supplies drowned in the river Ob', as they wrote in their petition...that is all untrue."

Only one boatload got slightly wet since

> "they transported their supplies early in spring after the thaw."[418]

Tukhachevskii ordered Rukin, Tomsk *syn boiarskii* Vasilii Prokof'ev and sixty cossacks to transport grain to the Enisei Kyrgyz grasslands. Even after this, Rukin disobeyed again, and when Tukhachevskii tried to imprison him, Tobol'sk *litva* and mounted cossacks interfered.

When the army left Tomsk on 20 June 1641, half a year later than planned, and, due to desertion, 210 cossacks short of the envisaged 870, there was lasting disagreement about strategy – the cossacks wished to strike hard, and in fact took as many prisoners and booty as they could. Surprisingly, as they claimed, in no more than a month they managed amidst the steppe to exhaust their grain and money remuneration. Once they had seized a huge trail of dromedaries and other livestock in a successful assault, using the animals as shields to keep the Enisei Kyrgyz from retribution, they claimed they could no longer sustain campaign service. During the

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[417] Ibid., 53
[418] Ibid., 46, 54

campaign, one of Tukhachevskii's most ardent foes, *piatidesiatnik* I. Misailov, managed to sell weapons for eight roubles to Kyrgyz warriors, while accusing Tukhachevskii of the same feat. As the voevoda found out, many of his men planned to flee to the Kalmyks in the southwest, looking to seize the opportunity for trade. The cossacks were infuriated when they learned they should return their captives whom they considered their rightful remuneration for the campaign. Tukhachevskii planned to defeat the nomads, yet to treat them respectfully to placate potential opposition to a new *ostrog* amidst their lands. Returning successfully from the campaign, on a crossroads near Kuznetsk the vast majority of cossacks in the circle could find no good reason to depart again and build an *ostrog*; after a row only twelve men, half of them his own military slaves, followed Tukhachevskii.[419]

Syn boiarskii Ivan Rukin and his entourage of Tobol'sk *litva* and mounted cossacks appeared to have their own agenda concerning Achinsk and the desirable status of the area. Yet the majority of cossacks could hardly care less – as mentioned, they might sympathise with the former, but they were much more concerned with their short-term gains, and negotiated for salary as best they could. Returning to Tomsk the cossacks received a caravan of Ob Ostiaks to exchange livestock and slaves for furs. On 13 August and 9 October 1641 4,418 roubles cash salary and 2506 sack of rye flour and 2,591 ½ *chet'*; 906 *chet'* of oat; 450 *chet'* groats and oatmeal; and 700 ¾ *chet'* oat were delivered from Tobol'sk. Tukhachevskii's rebellious cossacks straight away petitioned Tomsk voevodas to issue grain *zhalovan'e* for their "military affairs". In Tomsk, they claimed, they were dying of starvation since rye was expensive – four roubles for one *chet'*. Again, negotiations started, and the voevodas gave in as before. Having received their salary for two years in advance, as the Tomsk voevodas reported, they nevertheless objected to a return to Tukhachevskii. They claimed that they were unable to serve under his leadership:

> "...we will not obey voevodas Iakov Tukhachevskii and we will not serve this service."[420]

Tomsk voevodas adopted desperate means – they allowed the cossacks to elect their own leaders to head for the *ostrog* of Achinsk, which then had been established

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[419] Ibid., 45-61
[420] Ibid., 73-4

by Tukhachevskii's few men. In his unusually detailed and reliable piece on the Achinsk campaign based on archival sources *en passant* of his studies on the foundation and subsequent flourishing of the town of Achinsk, which, years before Pokrovskii's first book on the cossacks, in the spirit of its time does not aspire to an analysis of the campaign,[421] let alone the forms of organisation, or the way in which cossacks negotiated their salary, Rezun claims this was unusual;[422] yet as already mentioned, it was a common, institutionalised practice. Since the cossacks were little inclined to relieve Tukhachevskii in his steppe fortress, they claimed not to be able to leave for Achinsk as long as there was no sovereign's decree assigning a voevoda since – "it is not [our] custom", they declared, to elect their own voevoda. They had good reason to hesitate, as Tukhachevskii inundated Moscow and Tomsk with petitions demanding severe punishment for the "traitors" who had deserted him. The rebels, however, suffered no harm, for they bluntly declared they would not allow any of them to be imprisoned selectively, but only all together – a fairly improbable outcome. The *Personenverband* formed of these oddly assorted cossacks from several towns defied the *razriad*-voevodas of Tomsk, and a *stol'nik* voevoda Klubkov-Mosal'skii at that, using the tsar's own institutional prerogatives. It was only after a decree from Moscow arrived, and as many as fifty-seven cossacks had taken to their heels, that the rest of Tukhachevskii's army, reinforced by new men, well prepared for trade by the *zhalovan'e* they had received, and under the officially-confirmed leadership of the second Tomsk voevoda I. Kobylskii, set out to relieve the founder of Achinsk.[423]

Thus, when the interests of the *Personenverband* were concerned, even *zhalovan'e* could not guarantee the smooth execution of Moscow's wishes. This sheds light on the decisive powers of the *Personenverband* – cossacks could not live without their remuneration, and depended on disbursement in advance in order to make their actions viable. Negotiations about a sensitive issue such as the granting of loans for years in advance were fierce, yet contenders insisted on the legitimacy of their actions.

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[421] Rezun, "Pokhod", 42
[422] Ibid., 74. See 36-57, chapts.I, V passim.
[423] Ibid., 73-5

Rezun believes that Ivan Rukin and his supporters, who put up a more fervent opposition to Moscow's and Tukhachevskii's plans, feared the establishment of a sovereign's fortress headed by a voevoda, which from the point of view of Rezun's time is identical with the "all-powerful…state".[424] To a certain degree, they certainly considered "the state" a competitor, however, it seems unikely that they perceived it as "all-powerful" since they had already proven again that the state was not even capable of controlling efficiently what was going on in the frontier. Therefore, they rather feared the competition of another *Personenverband* in trade – and an unwelcome voevoda with personal needs – at Achinsk that would exclude them from exploiting parts of the hinterland of Tomsk and Tobol'sk. Similar motivations can be found on a number of other occasions. Thus, in December 1672 Samoil Aleksandrov *syn* Lisovskii, *prikazchik* of Barguzinsk, reported that on three occasions five cossacks from Selenginsk had used a forged decree to turn away more than thirty local Tungus from Barguzinsk, inciting them to pay *iasak* in neighbouring Selenginsk.[425] In 1661, Irkutsk was founded on behalf of a petition by a Buryat princeling pledging the Eniseisk voevoda for protection from the depredations of the Krasnoiarsk cossacks.[426] In another case, in 1646 Eniseisk voevoda F.F. Uvarov proposed, in accordance with a petition of "the whole town (*vsia gorod*)" which referred to delays and shortcomings in the administration of justice, submitted to the Siberian chancellery that Eniseisk should no longer be part of the Tomsk *razriad*, but rather that legal matters should be investigated in Eniseisk.[427]

Credit, Trade and Service

Cossacks considered their possessions and entitlements worthy of defence, and cossack service desirable. Therefore, for the Siberian authorities recruitment was not as thorny an issue as for example in the German Empire; actually problems related to recruitment were altogether different. The Siberian chancellery could not even think of the vigorous suppression of rebellions, and could not exert a control tight enough

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[424] Cf. Ibid., 67

[425] RGADA f.1121 op.1 no.2 ll.22-3 (report). Emelka Evdokimov was a local leader (see chapt.V), another figures "with comrades".

[426] Kopylov, "O date", 166

[427] Aleksandrov, *Vlast'*, 123, 164. See 212-5, 231-6. Cf. Lantzeff, *Siberia*, 47, claiming without evidence rivalries were caused by the voevodas.

as to impose exterior discipline; desertion could be a problem in some regions where there were new, more attractive conditions. However, even the settlers in Albazin, which came closest to a "free cossack republic", choose to collect and pay the *iasak* – thus allowing the interpretation that they were loyal; hence the Siberian chancellery was quick to deliver whatever supplies were needed.[428] Rather than desertions, though they were not unknown, the Siberian chancellery was forced to tackle the problem of unsanctioned enrolment. After investigations headed by Moscow or Tobol'sk envoys, those unlawfully registered by the voevodas were ousted.[429] Siberian cossacks paid enormous bribes just for the privilege of enrolment – an investigation in Selenginsk in 1720 revealed that common bribes regularly amounted to up to seven roubles and a length of Chinese cloth, although some paid even more. At the same time warlords in the German Empire were forced to pay increasingly higher amounts of *Handgeld*, a one-off payment on enrolment. *Handgeld* often amounted to more than a mercenary could earn in a whole year and nevertheless – or rather for that reason – the princes and towns faced frequent defections, sometimes already on the recruiting square *(Musterplatz)*. While German princes could only fill the ranks of their armies with criminals and vagrants, thus inevitably harming their efforts to increase discipline, in Western Siberia the Siberian chancellery increasingly relocated those enrolled unlawfully from among the banned, the vagrant and even the tax-paying people to their former quarters. The aim was to increase the number of descendants of cossacks among the recruits.[430] Even in the east itself, a candidate needed some qualifications to be eligible for service. Twenty-six out of 185 cossacks interrogated at Selenginsk in 1720 were Tungus, Buryats or Mongols baptised shortly before their enrolment during 1700-1719. Seventy-two were vagrants (*guliashchie*) – mostly sons of peasants, *bobyli*, and priests or orphans from all over Siberia and the north of Russia while just seventy-one cossack sons, and three "inhabitants", were enrolled, the latter two groups all from Selenginsk. However, in Siberia vagrants showed a tendency to remain in the same place for long periods, or return regularly. Just twelve of the *guliashchie* had lived in Selenginsk for

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[428] Forsyth, *Peoples*, 106; Bakhrushin, *Ocherki ... kolonizatsii*, 167
[429] Aleksandrov, *Vlast'*, 200
[430] Ibid., 91

four years or shorter, and only half of the latter for one year or less, while thirty-six had made a living in Selenginsk for ten to twenty-seven years before enrolment. Two enrolled cossacks had formerly been banned for unknown reasons – the latter a rather low percentage. Eight came from the *posad* or were descendants of *posad* people, one of them even a merchant.[431]

A certain degree of steadiness and the ability to adapt to the new environment, as well a minimal accumulation of wealth were preconditions for enrolment as a cossack, at least in the first two decades of the eighteenth century, when Selenginsk was a rich caravan town on the Chinese border. The attractiveness of cossack service can be discerned from the fact that out of the 218 aforementioned cossacks in Selenginsk only thirty-two claimed they had not bribed the voevoda or the *prikazchik* to be recruited, many of the others paying as much as seven roubles, while another fifteen are not known to have paid bribes. While in the second half of the seventeenth century military service in the German Empire lost its appeal even to the lower classes[432], in Siberia at the turn of the seventeenth century cossack service still looked appealing for people from the *posad.* Although there was a shortage of manpower, most of the vagrants or rather migrants had to wait for decades to enrol, until they were reliable enough for the service of the sovereign and had acquired some local knowledge.

At least in the 1690s payments were considered so reliable in Eastern Siberia that cossacks could frequently take out a loan on this security. Between January and August 1694 in Irkutsk twenty-six foot and mounted cossacks borrowed sums between one and five roubles, which were to be paid directly by the voevoda's office "in advance for the next year (1694/1695) from my first instalment" or on the spot "in advance for next year". Buyers of these futures were the *prikazchik* of the Eniseisk *gost'* Ushakov, mounted cossack *piatidesiatnik* Erofei Iakovlev *syn* Mogilev, the mounted cossack *desiatnik* and holder of the venal office of the scribe in the town square Andrei Kakhovskii, the cossack Ivan Kandrageev *syn* Khmelev, and the *pod'iachii* Ekim Samoilov, all of Irkutsk. These transactions show that economic relations were intense enough to change social relations. The need to

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[431] RGADA f.214 kn.1619, ll.21-110 (investigation). See also chapt.IV.
[432] Burschel, *Söldner*, 318-9

identify debtors generated by the developing financial relations in a quickly growing town with a high turnover in population led to the routine recording of full names. In Irkutsk, all ordinary cossacks and lower ranks signing a loan were recorded with their father's name, which was not common practice in other documents. On the contrary, the town square scribe and the higher-ranking *pod'iachii* who drew up the deeds were recorded with their titles and whereabouts, but without their father's name. Significantly, the same was true for two cossacks signing their transaction in the small Bel'skii *ostrog*.[433]

The economic success achieved by means of such loans could be considerable. In 1691 unknown perpetrators stole soap and tobacco from the premises of Irkutsk cossack Andrei Osharov. Osharov, thereby unable to pay the lease, lost his soap factory and tannery to the owner *syn boiarskii* Sidor Shestakov, who repossessed his property.[434] In the same year Osharov, not prepared to stand by for long reclaimed an – as yet minor – debt from a fellow cossack[435], and already in the next year came up with an even more ambitious plan to recover the soap works and tannery – this time he wanted finally to buy it out at the considerable price of 230 roubles. Unable to pay cash, he petitioned the Siberian chancellery for the right to take out a security. In 1693/1694 the Siberian chancellery accepted liability for Osharov's debt to the amount of four roubles per annum taken from Osharov's service entitlement.[436] The records are silent on whether this was the full annual amount of payment due, but apparently the arrangement was attractive enough for Shestakov to agree to the deal. For several years all went well for Osharov's and Shestakov's deal, while Osharov rose to become a *desiatnik* of mounted cossacks, until in 1696, the year of the cossack rebellion around lake Baikal, the embattled voevoda Savelov tried to oblige his most important supporters. While Osharov was away from Irkutsk, Shestakov seized the opportunity to enrich himself unlawfully. He claimed that the payments had not been made, repossessed the factory, and finally had the returned Osharov "put in prison ... and had him flogged ... for two weeks". Osharov and his wife complained they were forced to pay for a horse worth five roubles fifty, clothes for

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[433] RGADA f.1121 op.1 no.317, ll.1-6
[434] Ibid. no.226, ll.2-17. Cited according to *opis'* (file "*vetkhoe*").
[435] Ibid. no.257, ll.24, 147
[436] Ibid. no.422, l.117

himself and his wife, and eight *funt*[437] silk to Sidor. In 1696, for Irkutsk the regular payment of all debts to all cossacks was still half a decade away, although neighbouring Nerchinsk already fully relished the rewards of the prospering caravan trade with China.[438] Yet Savelov had given many examples of subterfuge, Shestakov was his equal in this art, and an investigation was already impending against both. Whatever the reason for the quarrel, Shestakov could not indulge in his gains for too long. In early 1697, Irkutsk cossacks overthrew voevoda Savelov, and Shestakov was killed by rebellious Nerchinsk cossacks siding with the relatives of a Tungus guide he had killed in a quarrel while leading a caravan returning from China.[439] The Siberian chancellery, though still ignorant of this train of events, fully endorsed Osharov's complaints, ordered the return of his valuables and again obliged the Irkutsk treasury to pay the full liability each year.[440] Only months after this lawsuit, Osharov managed to take part in escorting the *iasak* treasury to Moscow, providing him with an opportunity to buy merchandise in the capital. When he re-applied for remuneration in advance for 1699/1700 after returning in early 1699, the loss of one fifth of the treasury during the journey was considered, yet in the end he was exculpated and received his salary.[441] In 1699/1700, Andrei Osharov was busy in Irkutsk, most likely working at his *zavod*; he exchanged his service due in the frontier fortress of Tunkinsk during 1700/1701 with rank-and-file cossack Poliakov avoiding any distraction from his endeavours.[442]

The rebellion of the Transbaikalians, and the subsequent fall of the voevoda, had changed the balance of power in favour of Osharov. Yet Osharov, a cossack of low status, gained primarily through the engagement of the chancellery and its steadfast commitment for financial securities.

Flourishing international trade induced such a commitment. As merchants had to fear hungry cossacks and had yet to rely on them on distant journeys, it comes as no surprise that after the crisis of payments following the 1670s there was first a consolidation in Nerchinsk, the essential border post on the caravan route to China.

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[437] 1 *funt* = 409.5 grams
[438] Leont'eva, *Sluzhilye*, 116, 125-6
[439] Aleksandrov, *Vlast'*, 324. See chapter V.
[440] RGADA f.1121 op.2 no.183, ll.2-4 (decree)
[441] Ibid. op.1 no.175 ll.41-2
[442] Ibid. no.462, l.7

By 1690 all outstanding payments were made, and no further delays occurred except for those allowances not applied for in individual years. A decade later, the same level of performance was reached in Irkutsk, and in 1703 caravans finally changed their route to the shorter Irkutsk-Selenginsk-Beijing trail.[443]

In many ways, the Siberian chancellery managed to bind cossacks' interest in petty or large-scale overland trade to its own business of securing the fur tax. Cossacks often received part of their salary which was either delayed or was paid in advance on arrival at the Siberian chancellery with the sovereign's fur treasury or with reports the voevoda sent to Moscow. In Moscow the "*podennyi korm*" was paid at a rate of three to four kopeks per day, "on taking leave of Moscow" between two and six roubles – however this was paid not only to cossacks, but also to servants of the bishop, *sworn men,* and *iasak* people as long as their journey was related to the "sovereign's affairs"[444]

During the seventeenth century, a variable total of up to fifty roubles in trade goods was free of tax, as well as *zhalovan'e*. Taken together, this could amount to a considerable sum: In early 1697 Nerchinsk *syn boiarskii* Grigorii Lonshakov was sent to Moscow to convey the sovereign's treasury – destined as *zhalovan'e* for cossacks and *iasak* people – back to Nerchinsk. He had prepared for this long journey appropriately, carrying goods, mainly Chinese cloth and other items worth 275 roubles. However, of the whole amount he paid taxes only for goods worth 145 roubles, since fifty roubles were tax-free anyway, and merchandise worth another eighty roubles was counted as *zhalovan'e* for 1694-6 and even "*vpred*" (in advance) for the years 1697 and 1698. He was the leader of a caravan to China in 1689-91, one of a number of rich merchants among the cossacks. Some of these were kin of merchant families, attracted by the opportunities for trade that cossacks enjoyed, in particular service journeys abroad; diplomatic journeys were otherwise inaccessible to merchants, who therefore worked together closely with their cossack relatives. In Irkutsk and Nerchinsk *uezds*, such families included the Savvateevs, Istopnikovs, Shtinnikovs and Torshievskiis; some merchants however preferred to become

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[443] Leont'eva, *Sluzhilye*, 327

[444] Astapenko, *Istoriia*, 107; Nikitin, *Sluzhilye*, 103-141; idem, "K voprosu o sotsial'noi prirode", 54-55; Alekseev, *Sibir'*, vol.2, 346; Safronov, F.G., *Russkie na severo-vostoke Asii*, Moscow 1978, 72-79

cossacks themselves, such as the Burdukovskiis, or the Selenginsk *piatidesiatnik* Dmitrii Tarakanovskii, recorded as a trader in the 1680s and early 1690s in Nerchinsk, Selenginsk, and Udinsk. However these few families did not make up the vast majority of cossacks escorting the caravans. In 1698, the caravan of Spiridon Liangusov was escorted by one hundred cossacks, using the loophole created by new, complicated decrees limiting the number of tax-exempt escorting cossacks to four, and their tax privilege to a mere twenty roubles; not surprisingly, the Siberian chancellery reacted furiously. Even so, between twenty and fifty cossacks constituted a normal escort.[445]

Although the lion's share in trade regularly belonged to the merchants, *deti boiarskie* and wealthy rank-and-file cossacks, it would be artificial to separate a "*verkhushka*" from the poor mass of the cossacks.[446] According to precedents, lesser cossacks took their turn in the caravan's escort and in other distant services.[447] Out of 127 cossacks and *deti boiarskie* who escorted six caravans between Nerchinsk and Beijing during 1690-1701, only twenty-four declared less than twenty roubles of dutiable merchandise on return. In the resulting statistics, a large middle field can be determined, with cossacks bringing back significantly more than their cash *zhalovan'e* for the two years of service. Fifty-two cossacks imported merchandise worth three to fourteen times their entitlement of seven roubles (20-100 roubles), and another twenty-four carried wares up to two hundred roubles. The wealthy cossack merchants can be divided into several groups as well, with eleven trading in between 200 and 300 roubles, and another twelve bringing back 330 to 630 roubles. It has to be admitted that there was a considerable gap to those cossacks and *deti boiarskie* earning the largest incomes from the caravan trade – these four brought back 1,442 roubles 60 kopeks, 2,450 roubles, 2,464 roubles and 2721 roubles, accounting for nearly half of the merchandise worth 23,813 roubles cossacks and *deti boiarskie* imported from China in these years. Nevertheless, it is hard to see how the garrisons could be divided into the leadership on the one hand and ordinary cossacks on the other. As Leont'eva rightly points out, it misses the point that ordinary cossacks in

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[445] Leont'eva, *Sluzhilye*, 322, 292-4, 307
[446] Cf. Aleksandrov, "Dal'nevostochnykh", 216
[447] Aleksandrov, *Vlast'*, 158, 375; Nikitin, *Sluzhilye*, 98-100

the escort received their merchandise exclusively as a form of payment for services to the merchants, since these services could form a considerable part of the business.[448] Moreover, in many ways much of the population of *uezds* involved in foreign trade took part in the profits of caravans. In 1699 Nerchinsk cossack E. Gusevskii drove twenty-five horses across the border with the caravan of Iakov Beiton, to carry 185 *pud kitaiki* back from Beijing; he received Chinese silver worth 555 *lan*, or three *lan* for one *pud* load. Profitable contracts like this were very widespread. On Nerchinsk market, where cattle, horses etc. were in good supply, locals never sold livestock. The border was close, caravan escort was restricted to members of the border garrisons, and cossacks of each town were allowed to escort only to the next station on the way. Therefore selling food to members of a caravan was more profitable than in the market place.[449] During the period of Russian-Chinese caravan trade through the town, the number of assignments of Nerchinsk rank-and-file cossacks as *deti boiarskie* increased significantly. Members of the cossack families of the Liangusovs, Molodois, Kazanovs, Peshkovs, Khludnevs, Lugovskiis, Firsovs, and others, started during the 1670-80s as ordinary cossacks. They advanced in the 1690s and early years of the eighteenth century to the ranks of *piatidesiatnik*, *deti boiarskie*, and *dvorian* of the Nerchinsk and Moscow list. They shared a growing professionalism and good fortune in trade, leading some of them to the conclusion that changing their profession from cossack or servitor to private merchant served their interests better, despite the lost privileges. Though records on individual careers are usually incomplete, the high margins of profit in caravan trade allowed careers like Nerchinsk cossack V. Khludnev, who moved to Selenginsk when the caravans changed their route, and returned from Beijing in 1717 with Chinese merchandise worth 875 roubles. In 1726 he had already changed his profession to merchant, and sent his *prikazchik* to Moscow with Chinese wares worth 10,845 roubles.[450]

Nevertheless, many risks were associated with caravan trade, and many ordinary cossacks who travelled for the first time found that they could not master all of them,

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[448] Cf. Aleksandrov, "Dal'nevostochnykh", 216. Leont'eva, *Sluzhilye*, 310-312, 315, 351-3, 327

[449] Leont'eva, *Sluzhilye*, 312

[450] Kafengauz, B.B., *Geografiia vnutrennei torgovli*, Moscow 1950, 192; Leont'eva, Sluzhilye, 341-3.

as scores of law-suits show. Returning with empty hands or damaged goods due to inexperience or frequent unforeseeable events on the road, they lacked the material backing their wealthier comrades enjoyed. Since high-interest short-term loans of well over one hundred roubles were not rare, they found themselves frequently pilloried, and redeemed themselves at a rate of five roubles annually:

> "Cossacks, gunners and other servitors of the lesser ranks, who cannot buy themselves out from their debt, shall be handed over to the litigant after one month for indentured labour."[451]

It is little wonder, therefore, that at the border-post a second caravan of creditors usually awaited those returning, eager to get hold of their merchandise. Even for wealthy *gosti* like the Ushakovs and Nikitins foreign trade was connected to a whole system of loans.[452] For ordinary cossacks it was a great relief to face the considerable risks with the security of interest-free *zhalovan'e* in advance. The huge advantage such an arrangement offered the cossacks can be appraised from the high rates of interest in Muscovy: 20 per cent as against 5 per cent in the Netherlands – a level matched by an equally huge problem to make debtors pay for their debts.[453] The Siberian chancellery took care of the needs of cossacks escorting caravans; in a decree concerning the use of additional *zhalovan'e* issued in 1698/99 it was stipulated that to ease preparations those who were sent on distant journeys should receive more cash *zhalovan'e* and less merchandise.[454]

Even ordinary cossacks were very much up to the relative prices on different markets, as the dogged resistance by the Tobol'sk cossacks to their new voevodas' plans to hold back *zhalovan'e* on the occasion of the campaign to set up Iakutsk *ostrog* in 1638 shows. In the course of their finally successful struggle they observed:

> "As compared to Tobol'sk, in the fort of Eniseisk everything is three times more expensive. And if they receive their salary [only] at the river Lena, they will not find anything for their needs, and what they find they will have to buy at exaggerated prices."[455],

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[451] Hellie, Richard (transl., ed.), *The Muscovite Law Code (Ulozhenie) of 1649*, Irvine/CA 1988, pt.I., 81. Debt bondage: idem, *Slavery in Russia*, Chicago 1982.

[452] Leont'eva, *Sluzhilye*, 343; Bakhrushin, S.V., "Torgi gostia Nikitina v Sibiri i Kitaie", in: idem, *Trudy* vol.3 pt. 1, Moscow 1955, 226-251

[453] Arel, Maria, "Making a Honest Rubel in the Russian North", *FzGO* vol.54 (1998), 15-20.

[454] RGADA f.1121 op.1 no.451 ll.17-19 (report)

[455] Pokrovskii (ed.), *Pervoe stoletie*, no.26, pp. 86-9

which was indeed the situation early in the century.

Although caravan-trade was the quickest way to get rich, for the new and poor men there were more effective means available involving less of a gamble. The caravan trade infused other, less spectacular trades and crafts with new life, many of them held by cossacks. Grain forestallers travelling the country-side to buy out grain on the voevoda's request were largely *deti boiarskie* and some upwardly mobile rank-and-file cossacks. Yet on account of direct sales in the market-place, for example in Nerchinsk in the years 1699/1700, 1701, 1703, and 1714, all other categories of sellers were outnumbered more than ten times by 151 ordinary cossacks, rank-and-file, *desiatniki*, retired and their relatives. Their presence was overwhelming in number of sales and a volume of 2,115.75 *chetverty*, while all other suppliers taken together accounted for just 394.5 *chetverty*.[456] A lower proportion of cossacks joined in trading livestock, with 33 per cent of all cattle sold in Irkutsk market during 1694-1697 and twelve per cent in Nerchinsk in three periods during 1697-1701 belonging to cossacks of predominantly lower ranks. While forestallers accounted for most of the trade in livestock, traders in the market place were usually rank-and-file cossacks. Since the 1670s, nearly every year small caravans travelled from Nerchinsk, Irkutsk or Selenginsk to Mongol tribes to purchase livestock; the nomads also drove their cattle to Nerchinsk and the walls of Selenginsk on the brink of the open steppe. At least four cossack butchers occupied shops in Nerchinsk and two in Irkutsk.[457] Other commodities included furs, processed leather fur, salt, minerals, metals and light-coloured mica, which was used for windowpanes; some large, jointed church windows made of this material survive.[458] In all of these trades considerable numbers of cossacks were engaged. Jobs were available in servicing caravans, contractual provisioning of transport animals, building houses, or helping at harvest time, all of which were, due to a still limited work force in Eastern Siberia, well-paid up to the amount of a cossack's annual allowance.

Church architecture reflected how intricately interwoven cossack service, trade and localism were in Irkutsk *uezd*. Slovtsov considered a certain style of church

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[456] Leont'eva, *Sluzhilye*, 296 table 18
[457] Ibid., 298-300
[458] Serebrennikov, I.I., *Pamiatniki starinnago dereviannogo zodchestva v Irkutskoi gubernii*, Irkutsk 1915, table 17

architecture including *shatrovye* (tent-formed and sloped at the ends) bell-tower roofs instead of onion cupolas as "cossack taste", a way of building known in the European Russian north which in the last years of the seventeenth century was forbidden by decree, but continued in Siberia.[459] Monasteries and churches occupied a vital place in daily life. The refectory of the parish church often served as meeting room for the cossack community and priests were elected and paid by the parish.[460] After the Udinsk cossacks' raid at Il'insk on the possessions of the voevoda of Nerchinsk, Anton Savelov, the *desiatnik*, rebel cossack leader and elected *prikazchik* of Udinsk Mosei Borisov donated a part of his booty to Il'insk parish church as an appropriate means of pacifying the estranged inhabitants of Il'insk.[461] Considering the important role monasteries and churches played in everyday life, it is not surprising to find shops on the outside of the church as part of the "cossack" style. In the 1684 inventory of Irkutsk it is mentioned that under the porch of the Saviour church there were "six shops in a circle and two habitations". There was also a

> "new bell-tower with a tent roof made of logs near the church, and under the passage connecting it with the church there were four more shops and a church storehouse."[462]
>
> In Irkutsk and *uezd*, many wooden churches kept to this style. [463]

Conclusion

In comparison to mercenaries throughout Russia and in the German Empire, even ordinary Siberian cossacks were well off. Trade across an uncontrollable frontier region as vast as the south of Siberia in the seventeenth century presupposed the military power of small warrior groups as a key element of Moscow's power in the region. Given Muscovy's dependency on furs, as long as cossack duties included the collection of *iasak* or guarding trade overland and abroad, it proved hard for Moscow and its voevodas to reduce their income significantly. Moscow could not even militarily control the towns, as soon as the main part of the population, the cossacks, decided to rebel. The potential for negotiation derived from a variety of bottle-neck situations. These included the public distribution of huge annual deliveries of grain;

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[459] Ibid., 5; Slovtsov, *Obozrenie*, vol.1, 108
[460] Zol'nikova, N.D., *Sibirskaia prikhodskaia obshchina*, Novosibirsk 1990, 178-82
[461] RGADA f.1121 op.1 no.185 l.53
[462] Golovachev (ed.), *Pervoe stoletie Irkutska*, 1
[463] Serebrennikov, *Pamiatniki*, 6

the departure of large detachments of cossacks for campaign or guarding the caravans; salary's effect as an incentive actually to deliver the fur-tribute and information to Moscow, all of which were the duty of ordinary foot cossacks. Cossacks' effective impunity in collectively robbing merchants if they had not received their salaries also helped to improve their position in negotiations. Even in the long periods of abundance, when supply generally met allowance, these deliveries were occasionally unreliable due to bad communications. Although the government as well as the cossacks was generally interested in the substitution of grain salary for land, until the end of the seventeenth century frontier conditions on top of continuous expansion did not allow cossacks to live exclusively from their own lands. Conflicts arose as over-zealous or self-seeking voevodas attempted to introduce reforms that regional agriculture could not yet sustain, and also when regional centres such as Eniseisk competed for profitable *iasak* territories with disadvantaged, outlying frontier towns or fortresses in the steppe, which were dependent on the former for the delivery of salary. Local interests influenced the outcome of these conflicts to a considerable degree.

Used as an incentive for cossacks to explore new territories, negotiate with the fur-hunters as well as subjugate them and escort fur tributes, *zhalovan'e* itself became a bone of contention on a local level. Since *zhalovan'e* amounted to a hefty loan, cossacks were spurred to engage in petty overland and local trade whereby some of them became wealthy merchants. These loans and tax privileges as well as access to the *iasak* territories and to caravans granted to cossacks induced even merchants to set up their relatives as cossacks or they found it rewarding to enrol as cossacks themselves. Ironically, it was under the tutelage of the Siberian chancellery, promoting the state monopoly on trade with China, that numerous local cossack long-distance merchants were enabled to make their fortunes. As they strove to control the main sources of wealth, such as *iasak*, *zhalovan'e*, and interregional trade, local *Personenverbände* competed with one another for the revenue, within a town as well as between towns. They could be opposed to the voevoda, who by himself constituted a major contender in the struggle for revenue from *iasak* and trade, or choose him as their leader.

The *Personenverband* underwent certain changes: Remuneration elevated the position of the voevoda for it granted him power of allocation. Yet in times of dearth moral economy rallied the *Personenverband* to check these tendencies of hierarchisation on a local level. In doing so, the cossacks referred to customary expectation, precedent, the instructions the chancellery issued to the voevodas, and to decrees. In the end, local networks defined by *Personenverband* values often gained the upper hand even in prospering towns where cossacks found it convenient to subordinate themselves to a voevoda at least for his initial period of tenure. As long as the basic preconditions of Russian expansion in Siberia were in place, therefore, the *Personenverband* allowed interregional collaboration, exchange, even participation in decision-making, and at the same time fuelled a fierce localism.

Chapter III Integration of the Trading Frontier: The Sovereign's Affair

Throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Muscovy's territory increased more than thirty times to become an empire that included very different peoples, customs, religions and climates. Siberia dwarfed all other annexed territories. Although distances were already huge within Muscovy west of the Urals, this exacerbated the problems of governance in Siberia. During the early modern period, governance was restricted by many factors even in countries such as France or Germany, therefore the question of how Siberia was integrated into the realm and what institutions made its government possible is even more salient. The problem is also complicated since in Siberia the only officially-sanctioned armed forces were the various cossack bands, while the rest of the population bore weapons as well. For economic reasons, the tsar could not simply send an army to discipline Siberian towns. Yet just as there were economic reasons that prevented coercion being applied to rebels, there were also economic motives that urged the Siberian towns to remain under the suzerainty of the tsar. Since the main markets for fur and a considerable part of the supply of foodstuffs, weapons and other supplies were located in the west, they always sought some sort of agreement with Moscow. Because any accord was apt to be renegotiated more than once, institutions enabling cossacks to communicate with the chancellery and the tsar had to be flexible. On the other hand, they also had to confirm the expectation prevalent in autocratic Muscovy that only God's laws bound the tsar.

Hardly any institution in central Muscovy combined the expectation of faithful service with the needs of independent-minded traders in isolated outposts. Yet institutions are not as pre-determined as it may seem – the actual meaning of symbolical forms depends on the distribution of power in society. The exercise of power in seventeenth-century Siberia was different from its exercise in central Muscovy. Therefore the vital institution regulating service and providing for the security of the tsar, the sovereign's word and affair, in Siberia obtained variant meanings as well. Thus, for example, the Selenga rebels justified the siege of Irkutsk in 1696 as well as several confiscations of voevodas' merchandise by declaring a

sovereign's affair against the voevoda, and called for his deposition. Due to the staunch support that the Irkutsk *Personenverband* afforded the voevoda, and substantial fortifications, they could not achieve this in that particular case, however other Siberian cossack rebels quite frequently deposed the voevoda by the same means. This chapter focuses on the regalian salutation and the sovereign's word and affair as examples of key institutions which proved particularly useful for the Siberian cossack bands in their relations with the Muscovite centre, as a case study which suggests an explanation for the processes of adaptation Muscovite institutions underwent in Siberia. The institutionalist approach chosen in this study stresses that despite such transformations, they remained Muscovite institutions; hence, in principle all Muscovites could apply them. Power relations determined what these and other institutions facilitating communication throughout Siberia and Muscovy meant to Siberian cossacks. The first two chapters have established three main factors influencing these relations: the *Personenverband*, its capacity to negotiate salary and credit, and the fur trade. This chapter will explore the interplay of these factors with other sources of power and the institutional environment Muscovy provided to Siberia. Before dealing with the specific features of the regalian salutation and the sovereign's word and affair it will, however, consider certain aspects of the Siberian environment necessary for an understanding of the particular way the sovereign's word and affair operated in the very different power-structures of Siberia.

Siberia in the Seventeenth Century – a Vast Military Camp?

From Müller onwards, historians of Siberia have agreed that Moscow conquered and controlled Siberia by means of strong authority. Since Müller stressed the achievements of state power already during the discovery and conquest of Siberia, the state's exclusive initiative in establishing absolutism has never been called into question.[464] For critics of tsarist rule, the glory added to the tsar's crown by the conquest of Siberia was an eyesore, although they did not disapprove of the conquest as such; to such commentators it radiated tsarist credentials. The Siberian regionalists in the nineteenth century, therefore, stressed the exploitation and suppression of

[464] Miller, *Istoriia*, vol.1, 249-50, 273-7 and passim

Siberia as a Russian colony, but did not grasp the nature of early modern conditions. Slovtsov believed frequent nomad assaults were invited by the chancellery's negligence and reluctance to afford proxy powers to regional voevodas, caused by its acquisitiveness and distrustful attitude, which in turn destroyed regional unity. The greedy voevodas sent out scores of small groups, measures that depleted garrisons in towns and fortresses.[465] Early Soviet historians attacked tsarism, but hardly questioned the tsars' powers of suppression. From the 1940s onwards, others again attempted to rescue the old statist paradigm – accordingly, the estate-representative monarchy's demise came about by the intervention of the strengthened state. Nevertheless, the conception of the estate-representative monarchy was a step on the way towards overcoming a view that ascribed all developments in Muscovy to centralisation. At the same time, however, this paradigm, following Bogoslovskii, considered the "bureaucracy" that allegedly marginalised the estates, as no more than a governing class occupied in administration for salary.[466]

Current accounts of governance in the early modern period stress problems in enforcing laws and decrees throughout Western Europe.[467] Yet the latest Western historiography on Siberian administration and on the cossacks has done little to explore these problems and the specific dynamics of early-modern governance in the Siberian context. Dmytryshyn's account rests on the implicit assumption that all institutions, and especially bureaucracies, were – or at least became – modern during the seventeenth century,. Unimpaired by this development, the tsar's power was unbridled by institutional arrangements of any kind, or by physical, customary and social impediments. Administration consisted of two intertwined tiers of effective "bureaucracies", the Moscow and local levels. Dmytryshyn explains bureaucratic efficiency by the Russians' superior knowledge, skills, and technological superiority, without referring to a general early modern context.[468] There is also not a word about how much time it took to convey Moscow's "timely guidance", which is allegedly

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[465] Slovtsov, *Obozrenie* vol.1, 33-4, 37, 87; Collins, David N., "Russia's Conquest of Siberia:", *European Studies Review* vol.12 (1982), 17-4

[466] Aleksandrov, *Vlast'*, 1-10, 15-6, 351-7; Bogoslovskii, M.M., *Zemskoe samoupravlenie na Russkom Severe v XVII v.*, Moscow 1912, vol.II, 261

[467] Henshall, *Myth*; Landwehr, *Policey*

[468] Dmytryshyn, "Administrative", 18-21, 34-5

proof of the chancellery's control of Siberia. Thus, to Dmytryshyn absolute power was a local reality:

> "Of course, the tsar – the absolute and autocratic monarch – whose power was unrestricted, presided over both ... bureaucracies. Indeed, the entire conquest was undertaken in his name, and the whole area was his patrimony, and the revenues went into his treasury."[469]

At particular points, Dmytryshyn passes sentence on bribery or physical extortion, without exploring the context. He is most articulate and witty where he tells how the voevoda was forced to devise special tasks – such as sentry duties in the steppe (!) – to keep cossack boredom below critical level. This remains the only flimsy hint at cossack rebellions, devised more to distract from or to discredit them. Yet Dmytryshyn does not address the obvious contradictions in his account between the supposed boredom and the "perennial lack of manpower" he has also found. The question of how bureaucratic efficiency, which he stresses, could be achieved if the voevodas often lacked enough men even to defend towns is not addressed at all.[470]

All of Siberia is presented as one huge "military camp", but the reader is left wondering what "military" means here. Cossacks enjoyed no privileges, voevodas closely controlled their mobility and they apparently engaged neither in trade nor, miraculously, in robbery.[471] Dmytryshyn reduces petitions and their functions to a sentence, suggesting that they served Moscow well by providing intelligence about the colony. Henry Huttenbach provides a more balanced approach, pointing out the vibrant and dynamic life in the frontier. In his account, careful observation is mixed with unexplored tensions as he does not explain how Russian Siberians could be "Muscovites at heart and in substance, [yet, they] were also Siberian in personality." While giving a good sense of Siberian rebelliousness, he fails to explain how "Muscovite central authority quickly snuffed out these Siberian troublespots."[472]

In Dmytryshyn's view Muscovy's aims in Siberia were not commercial. He deviates from his distinguished predecessor, Lantzeff, whose main hypothesis is that the Siberian chancellery was a giant business enterprise run on behalf of the tsar by

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[469] Ibid., 35
[470] Ibid., 25, 29-30, 34
[471] Ibid., 31
[472] Huttenbach, Henry R., „Muscovy's Penetration of Siberia", in: Rywkin, Michael (ed.), *Russian Colonial Expansion*, London 1988, 70-102, here: 100, 97

officials in Moscow and Siberia. Yet Lantzeff failed to explain how the tsar's orders came to life in an isolated and distant environment. While he did acknowledge a certain level of "democratic" habits among the cossacks, he explained this phenomenon by state-imposed mutual responsibility.[473] However, this judicious observation is not related to the administrative structure of Siberia. Similarly, he dealt with the Siberian chancellery's demands to the voevodas to ask their cossacks for advice on essential service-related issues in isolation. Like Bakhrushin, Lantzeff was convinced that the sole cause for cossack "disturbances" were voevodas' machinations and maltreatment. Although he mentioned the removal and imprisonment of voevodas, he failed to analyse who had the power to try and arrest them; Lantzeff also overlooked the fact that the cossacks detained voevodas without orders.[474]

This apparent lack of reflection on the relations between the administration and social relations in Siberia is a feature of both the vivid and often controversial Russian-language and Western historiography. A recent western review of Russian and Soviet views on the conquest of Siberia discusses whether Russian settlement in Siberia was government-dominated or spontaneous, but does not explore the extent to which the government controlled the cossacks.[475]

The distinguished early Soviet scholar Sergei Bakhrushin took a hard look at these issues. However, he had extreme ideas about the inefficiency of mechanisms of control. He wrote in a sweeping style, though not necessarily with balanced judgement about the rituals and institutions of relieving the voevoda:

> "The ceremony of reception and the contents of speeches was once and for all laid down in the instructions the voevoda received in Moscow. After two years, when a new voevoda arrived, he would tell with the same pathos his predecessor had employed, that the latter had mistreated his subjects and had robbed them. Out of mercy, he said, the sovereign put the speaker in his place – although he already knew exactly that after another two years the following voevoda would say the same about him. ...Since [the government] was unable to fight the abuses, it feigned instead and tried to distance itself in a naive manner in the eyes of the population from its own agents."[476]

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[473] Lantzeff, *Siberia,* 80
[474] Ibid., 205
[475] Collins, "Conquest", 33
[476] Bakhrushin, *Trudy* vol.IV, 164-5

It is the aim of this chapter to answer the question of whether Bakhrushin was indeed right, and to investigate the ways in which cossacks could subvert the alleged strict hierarchy of power in Siberia.

The Limited Public Sphere, Patronage, and Cossack Litigation

The main outside source of power available to Siberian cossacks was patronage. The peculiar form of subordination of Siberian towns and forts offered to Siberian cossacks opportunities to establish and make use of regionally-available support from high-ranking nobles. While the highest level of authority was unified in the Siberian chancellery in Moscow – unusual as it was in Muscovy – there was a still greater choice of authorities to which grievances could be addressed than the Moscow chancellery system offered to petitioners in the European Russian provinces.[477] To speed up the reaction to nomad assaults, first Tiumen' had been given an elevated status over the other towns and forts, a status soon to be transferred to Tobol'sk, which then headed the first so-called *razriad*. Yet in all but military affairs, Tobol'sk was only of minor importance; the Tobol'sk voevodas, it has been suggested, were more first among equals than superior officials, and enjoyed authority over other towns exclusively by emphasising the orders they received from Moscow. The Military Office (*Razriad*) in Moscow appointed voevodas, and even the Tobol'sk voevoda did not enjoy the right to depose by his own judgment even the least of the voevodas in his own *razriad*. Instructions issued to new voevodas in Moscow stressed that voevodas had to report issues of primary importance to Moscow, and those of secondary importance to Tobol'sk. Tobol'sk functioned as a centre for the collection of information, since Moscow was too far away to deal with this task on its own. The only leverage the voevoda of Tobol'sk had was to report a recalcitrant voevoda to Moscow.[478]

Members of a hostile faction, therefore, might relieve voevodas who enjoyed the support of the head of the Siberian chancellery.[479] Recent studies on Muscovy rejected the earlier view that noble clans represented mere kinship ties of competing

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[477] Kivelson, *Autocracy*, 156-61, 176. Exceptions: Ogloblin, *Obozrenie* pt. III, 184
[478] Lantzeff, *Siberia*, 39-45. See his organigram, Illustration III.
[479] See 154

individuals locked in mutual enmity and eagerness to please the tsar. They tend to portray noble clans as interwoven strands in the fabric of a single elite committed to a certain degree to the flourishing of the whole realm and the effectiveness of government.[480] Thus the outcome of litigation, even if for the time being the voevoda inhibited it, was unpredictable, but there was always the hope of a favourable settlement.

By the provisions relating to the *razriad*-status of towns and the assignment of voevodas, Moscow sought to prevent the concentration of power in Siberia in the hands of one person, and to stabilise its power beyond the Urals.[481] However, these terms also created a certain degree of fluidity in administrative relations. In many cases, the formally lesser voevoda did not accept his subordination to the *razriad* town. He might be motivated by the importance of honour to a Muscovite noble, who at least until the abolition of *mestnichestvo* in 1682 could find it hard to accept orders from a person of lower or equal rank, since that would affect his own and his kin's standing within the nobility.[482] Ignoring *razriad*-towns became a common tactic employed by voevodas in their squabbles with each other and among different kinship groups and clienteles, but it was useful to their foes among their local subordinates as well. Adding to ambiguity in administrative relations, towns and their voevodas sometimes attempted to establish an independent *uezd* that made their town less dependent on another *uezd* during court procedures. Squabbles between cossacks from towns in different *razriady* – for example, Eniseisk in Tomsk *razriad* (established 1608) and Mangazeia in Tobol'sk *razriad* – over furs, which often caused the mistreatment of the native population, led to the foundation of the third *razriad*, of Iakutsk, in 1638.[483] On occasion the voevodas of the *razriad* town commissioned special investigations into abuses of the assigned voevoda's power[484],

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[480] Crummey, Robert O., "The Latest from Muscovy", *RR* vol.60 (October 2001), 474-86, here 475-6

[481] Lantzeff did not relate this observation to rebellions and litigation: *Siberia*, 32. The *razriad* organisation was emulated later along the frontiers under the first two Romanovs in Riazan', Ukraine, Novgorod, Sevsk, Belgorod, Tambov, and Kazan': Kliuchevskii, "Kurs", 195; Chicherin, B.N., *Oblastnyia uchrezhdeniia Rossii v XVII-m veke*, The Hague 1968, 61.

[482] Ogloblin, *Obozrenie*, pt. III, 215, 36; Pokrovskii, *Pervoe stoletie*, no.26, 78-9

[483] Initially, this was an independent voevoda ruling over a handful of small forts lacking, it should be mentioned, the steppe frontier character of other *razriady*, only to be called the *Iakutskii razriad* in 1697. Lantzeff, *Siberia*, 34-9. Thus *razriady* were organisations of the frontier.

[484] Ibid., 42

which could be embraced by cossacks, or prove unpopular. Quarrels among voevodas offered ample opportunities for cossacks in the nominally subordinate towns to outmanoeuvre their voevoda and make use of the condition that voevodas were eager to serve the tsar – at least as long as patronage issues and their own interests did not interfere.

When in 1686 Krasnoiarsk *deti boiarskie* and cossacks sought their "full" remuneration, they could make use of the diverse and mutually bickering patronage and kinship networks among Siberian voevodas. Krasnoiarsk was by this time part of the Eniseisk *razriad*, and *stol'nik* and voevoda Grigorii I. Shishkov made sure to obey while his superior in Eniseisk was prince Konstantin O. Shcherbatyi. Still, when *deti boiarskie* Trifon Eremeev and Mikhail Bernadskii handed in a petition in Eniseisk, Shishkov reacted ruthlessly and, on their return, put them under guard. Threatening to make use of the knout, he forced them to sign yet another petition declaring that their first petition was a lie. Shishkov treated *syn boiarskii* Fedor Aikanov, who had petitioned in Eniseisk, in a similar way. Aikanov however was not so easily pacified; on 17th March 1686, he declared a sovereign's affair on the market square. Shishkov sent a messenger to bring him to the voevoda's office, and when Aikanov objected, he sent cossacks. Aikanov said he feared "he would be beaten to death" and demanded the gathering of the cossacks in front of the voevoda's office since he dare not go to the voevoda on his own. He arrived at the voevoda's office with a crowd of cossacks – as the voevoda reported, Fedor made them drunk and told his friends and "bread-eaters" to beat the drums and ring the alarm-bell. Aikanov was one of a family of cossacks and *deti boiarskie*; he was likely to mobilise his supporters and kin, but as subsequent events show, there was more going on in town. Confronting Shishkov from a point of safety amidst the crowd, Aikanov declared he could not make public his sovereign's affair and demanded permission to travel to Eniseisk, where he would report it. Shishkov demanded that he be told the contents of the accusation. He threatened again to make use of torture, this time, however, to no avail. The cossacks in the crowd demonstrated a clear sense of due legal

process[485] while defending Aikanov, which Bakhrushin did not notice. They petitioned orally that

> "Fedor cannot be tortured, for he has declared a sovereign's affair against you, *stol'nik* and voevoda Grigorii Shishkov. He must be sent under guard to Eniseisk."

Shishkov claimed that he did not lose his temper or try to beat Aikanov, but Aikanov's supporters threatened the voevoda so that several of his supporters, cossacks recruited among the exiles, had to be rescued from the mob.[486] Apparently, in a sense to be defined below, this event had a limited public character.

If Shishkov was right, then, the cossacks still made good use of the rivalry between Shishkov and his new superior in Eniseisk. They described in their petition a different course of events. According to them, Shishkov refused their demands and wanted to write to the Siberian chancellery himself, claiming that he was

> "not under the authority (*razriad*) of Stepan Afanas'evich Sobakin and [I] will not obey him and [I], Grigorii, [am] in any case more honourable than the *stol'nik* and voevoda."[487]

Taking Muscovite administrative law literally, the cossacks asserted they had met Shishkov head-on stating that "Krasnoiarsk is part of Eniseisk *razriad*" and they did not "want to disobey the decree of the great sovereign".[488] The incident shows that there was no chain of command privileged in an absolute sense. Rather, authority was liable to interpretation, to changeable leitideas derived from ambiguous and at times contradictory elements of various official decrees, laws, instructions, and local custom. In general, leitideas are formed from the contested and contradictory contents and interpretations of an institution, and they answer to and are promoted by socially conditioned needs which temporarily prevail in a given locality and social

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[485] Weickhardt, G.G., "Due-Process and Equal Justice in the Muscovite Codes", *RR* (1992) vol.51.4, 463-80, here: 477

[486] Bakhrushin, "Krasnoiarsk", 175-6

[487] Why Shishkov deemed himself more honourable than Sobakin is not clear. Several "Sobakins" were chamberlains in tsarevich Ivan's household in 1682: Bushkovitch, *Peter*, 133. One was Mikhail, but the relationship of his father Vasilii and uncle Grigorii Nikiforovich, boyars and *okol'nichye*, with Stepan and his brother Aleksei, who was a voevoda in Viatka in 1683-4, remains unclear.

G. Shishkov's brother Semen was killed as a voevoda at Chigirin in 1678: *Azbuchnyi ukazatel' imen russkikh deiatelei*, Vaduz 1963

[488] Bakhrushin, "Krasnoiarsk", 156-7

group; therefore, a certain leitidea can become obligatory to the exclusion of others in a place, a social group, and a particular period.[489]

The cossacks' aim was to gain access to the paths of information and communication, and they proved quite inventive in its pursuit. The next day, when Trifon Eremeev had also declared a sovereign's affair, the rebels felt strong enough to circumvent Shishkov's right to disallow departures and send a delegation to Eniseisk. Shishkov's subsequent attempt to discredit the petitioners when he heard about their tricks – they sat on a pillow stuffed with the petition while travelling by boat – by invoking a sovereign's affair got him nowhere. There was a noteworthy difference between Siberia and Russia in the way the sovereign's affair was used to dissolve petrified social relations. On the western side of the Urals it was mostly prisoners seeking to escape unbearable conditions who used it without much local support. They simply invented a sovereign's word or affair or denounced their former accomplices, often disregarding the grave consequences of a false denunciation to attain a brief spell of relief.[490] However, beyond the Urals the *Personenverband* often applied the sovereign's affair as a legal device to overcome the voevoda's capacity to block appeals in an administrative lawsuit, a measure that was introduced in Siberia for financial reasons. The sovereign's word and affair therefore was of particular use in breaking down barriers between the distant Siberian lands and Moscow.[491]

The question of whether Muscovy was a bureaucratic society has often been posed. For the central chancelleries in Moscow, Brown has given a more differentiated answer – in his analysis, Muscovy was no equal to modern bureaucratic political societies, with their political rights, genuine popular participation in public affairs, and an increased accountability of executive branch leaders and their subordinates.[492] Yet the chancellery system could claim the characteristics S.N. Eisenstadt formulated for "historical bureaucratic societies", i.e. staff specialisation, staff professionalisation, organisational hierarchy, and rule-making capacity. To an astonishing degree, chancellery staff maintained a culture of

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[489] For similar squabbles see Aleksandrov, *Vlast'*, 241-5. On leitideas: Introduction, 16.
[490] Lapman, *Denunciation*, 74-90
[491] *Aleksandrov, Vlast'*, 225; Pokrovskii, "Slovu", 27-8
[492] Brown, "Neither", 21

accountability.[493] Like most of the heads of the chancelleries in Moscow, the voevodas were nobles – albeit in the lesser towns and forts often minor *dvoriane* – but were not part of this system to the same degree as chancellery staff. Shishkov therefore was in the forefront of a conflict between a growing administrative-mindedness and the old privileges of the nobles, claiming the pre-eminence of *mestnichestvo* over administrative hierarchy, although the former was abolished in 1682.[494] Surprisingly, at least from the point of view of most interpretations of Siberian administration, his was a doomed cause. His foes' strength, however, lay in that they did and did not act out the same conflict. While their tenet was greater accountability – demanding their due salaries – and one of their means of achieving them was formal adherence to the principle of administrative hierarchy, their social environment does not fit the corporate description Brown gives for the chancelleries. In Muscovy, he found that scaled social value rather than a strict formal hierarchy shaped the social relations among the staff of the central chancelleries. It also guided the interpretation of terminology and statute application. In Siberia, the rank of the voevoda and his right to disallow a leave from service embodied an apparently strict hierarchy. Yet it was the non- or pre-corporative *Personenverband* rallying around the seemingly traditional means of a sovereign's affair which together provided the social backing enabling Siberian cossacks to break the monopoly on law suits a voevoda otherwise might have enjoyed. As it was integrated into the texture of Muscovite institutions, the looseness of the traditional cossack group, its ability to regroup spontaneously and to exercise control over other social groups as soon as it gained momentum, was usually sufficient to thwart the ambitions of a recalcitrant voevoda, although he was nominally more elevated in the hierarchy.]

Despite some inroads literacy had already made,[495] the seventeenth-century Siberian public was predominantly bound to personal interaction. Social experiences still stemmed mostly from direct communication among those who were present at an event. Therefore calling the Krasnoiarsk cossacks to meet when accusing the voevoda was essential – it afforded security to the litigant and constituted the public

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[493] Eisenstadt, *Empires*, 21-2
[494] Kivelson, "Devil"
[495] See 156-60.

character of the event. However, much care was afforded to the uses of the written official documentation of this litigation, the petition. Increasing literacy meant that the public could command experience of situations in which the sender or recipient of the communication are imperceptible – a process with many implications in a far-flung empire. The relation of written documentation and direct interaction in constituting a public sphere thereby became contingent and needed definition. Thus there was mounting tension when the petition was brought to Eniseisk in the pillow – the cunning of each side reached high levels.

Communication among those who are present means more than just vocal exchange of information, but is rendered as "symbolical-interpretative exchange"[496], in which gestures, mimic, dress and symbolical arrangements in space perform vital functions. Moreover, interaction tends to promote undifferenciated inclusion. The rule is that anyone involved in it cannot communicate: anyone can cut in at any time, but his speech and actions can also suffer from the intervention of others. Therefore communication in a public place depends on the permanent convergence of a centre of attention. The mentioned symbolical-theatrical elements as well as ceremonial structures and symbols relating to the sovereign's affair could form a specific communicative context from an amorphous mass of people.[497] The Krasnoiarsk cossacks displayed a very keen consciousness of these structuring elements of the public sphere – the symbolical centre was the sovereign's affair demanding attention from anyone involved. The litigant and his supporters eagerly observed the rules attached to the sovereign's affair – the litigant had to be brought to an impartial judge, if not directly to Moscow.

Similarly, the point of assembly in front of the voevoda's office directed attention to the sovereign's affair. Siberian cossacks acted in this way on numerous occasions – in Tomsk in 1648 they brought the litigant who had invoked a sovereign's affair without any suitable action taken on the part of the voevoda, directly from prison to the voevoda's office, where a huge crowd of several hundred cossacks had

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[496] Mead, Georg Herbert, *Geist, Identität und Gesellschaft*, Frankfurt/Main 1960

[497] Cf. Dörk, Uwe, "Der verwilderte Raum. Zum Strukturwandel von Öffentlichkeit in der frühneuzeitlichen Stadt am Beispiel Berns", in: Rau, *Taverne*, 119-54, here: 122-3

assembled and decided to depose and arrest the voevoda.[498] Owing to the *Personenverband*'s institutionalised custom of giving advice and deposing their leaders, the right to convocate military reviews was not only contested between voevoda and cossacks, but they were often converted into cossack assemblies.[499] Thus, before deliberating the actual contents of a petition and signing it, which were public activities taking place in suitable spaces, such as cossack circles or church refectories[500], attention was focused by public acts of accusation. These relatively open, inclusive public acts in which frequently outsiders – peasants, members of the *posad* – took part, were followed by an exclusive phase, after the *Personenverband* constituted by collectively signing the petition. Thus, actions of the *Personenverband* fitted the early modern partitioned public that pertained to certain groups in society but was nevertheless open enough to include others, at least at times. There could be petitions by different groups of the town population, but the cossack petition was the decisive document, defended by a sworn and influential community. Thus, the *Personenverband* was both constituted in public and, together with other institutional mechanisms, contributed to the permanence of the decisions reached at in public.

Close observation of what was to be made public and what was not at the same time testify to the nature of this public event – its limitations were defined by the sovereign's affair, the contents of which were not to be communicated to the voevoda who therefore could not judge them. Thereby, the litigants already actively set the agenda – while the public character of this assembly was limited to questions of due process, the following delibaration in the cossack circles that excluded the voevoda sought to define the contents of the sovereign's affair in order to win as many signatures as possible.

In some cases, however, cossacks decided not to confront voevodas of extremely exalted rank. Such was the case in Verkhotur'e, a town with a large and wealthy

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[498] Pokrovskii, *Tomsk,* 50-1, cf. 86-7. Examples in: Aleksandrov, *Vlast'*, 171-2, 173-192, 238; Pokrovskii, "Slovu i delu", 24-6;

[499] Aleksandrov, *Vlast'*, 187, 237. The extent to which this practice may also derive from *posad* or peasant custom remains to be investigated, see ibid., 378 n.167; Pokrovskii, N.N., "Neizvestnyi dokument o volneniiakh Ust'-nitsynskikh krest'ian v XVII v.", in: *Sibirskoe istochnikovedenie i arkheografiia*, Novosibirsk 1980, 178-84; Kivelson, Valerie, "Merciful Father, Impersonal State", *Modern Asian Studies*, 31,3(1997), 635-63, here: 661-2, for one example. On reviews, see Aleksandrov, *Vlast'*, 200.

[500] Alksandrov, *Vlast'*, 176-7; Pokrovskii, *Tomsk,* 94, 145; RGADA f.214 st.1424, ll.79-80, 122, 124 (petitions).

posad; yet even in this town situated on the very artery of Siberian trade, the cossacks proved the decisive force. With the Bashkirs close by, the town was in constant danger and well fortified.[501] While the cossacks remained inactive in the first of two cases interconnected by patronage, the *posad* in 1645 even confronted the voevoda, boyar M.F. Streshnev, a member of tsaritsa Evdokiia Luk'ianovna's clan. The incident was initiated by the town's second in command, *pod'iachii s pripis'iu* M. Likhachev, who met Streshnev head-on, accusing him of various abuses in front of other officials at the voevoda's office. When he made no headway at all, he went to the market place to make them publicly known. Relieving Likhachev of his duty, the Siberian chancellery sent F.M. Postnikov to Verkhotur'e in December. On his arrival in February, he found out about Streshnev's bribe-taking on the very first day of his inspection. Since the voevoda knew about a range of petitions signed by a priest "and all the land", by merchants, trappers, shipbuilders, and *iasak* tributaries, which had reached the Siberian chancellery, he decided to sack Postnikov on the pretext that "he was not sent according to the tsar's decree" and ordered his servants to beat him.[502]

Nevertheless, backing by a local group was essential in the vicious politicking between Streshnev and Postnikov. The *pod'iachii s pripis'iu* claimed that he had managed to escape the deadly beating only due to the threatening crowd gathering in front of the voevoda's court. The next day, his family carried him through town, to make Streshnev's oppression publicly known. There was never an attempt to investigate, let alone to punish the apparent indiscretions of the two *pod'iachii s pripis'iu*. In their desperate appeal to the public, they hoped for spontaneous support. The medium of such a sudden turn could only be the *Personenverband*, which was capable of accommodating a leader completely unknown to the locals.

Despite such administrative bravery, however, Verkhotur'e cossacks decided otherwise on this occasion. In town, Streshnev's servants again tried to capture Postnikov, yet they were impeded – as Postnikov claimed,

> "the *mir* has seen and heard our charge in this affair and the dishonour and how I was tormented and covered with blood."

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[501] Baidin, V.I., *Ocherki istorii i kul'tury goroda Verkhotur'ia*, Ekaterinburg 1998

[502] Aleksandrov, *Vlast'*, 259-61. Similar practice by cossacks: Pokrovskii, *Tomsk*, 246-9; Boškovska, "'Dort werden wir selber Bojaren'", 351, 367-8, 381-2. Cf. Rustemeyer, "Verrat", 269

Yet this *mir* should not be confused with a permanent organisation involved with decision-making. It was a spontaneous, public meeting in the market place, but remained without consequences beyond the immediate emergency – inclined to support Postnikov, as it was portrayed by him; it neither included more than a few cossacks, nor did it take steps feasible for cossacks drawing conclusions from such incidents, that this voevoda could no longer be supported. In marked breach with usual formulations, there was no mention of cossacks in Postnikov's report – or of other social groups, for that matter.[503] The voevoda may have as a precaution made sure of satisfying the cossacks, as Pokrovskii and Aleksandrov believe; otherwise, the complacency shown by the cossacks may have been due to Streshnev's exalted rank. In any case, this was not an opportunity Verkhotur'e cossacks would seize to present grievances against the voevoda, nor did they rise in rebellion. Verkhotur'e was anything but a provincial backwater, and its cossacks understood well not only their potential role as local power brokers, but also their exposed position in an internal border town to reproaches from Moscow or Tobol'sk.[504] Far from blind obeisance or complete insubordination, but also from the estates structures Aleksandrov and Pokrovskii try to prove, the Verkhotur'e cossacks were adept in navigating between different sources of authority.

While the cossacks also remained neutral in subsequent developments during Streshnev's period in charge, events make it clear to what degree *mestnichestvo* could destabilise even his exalted position. Verkhotur'e witnessed a startling confrontation between two members of top-level boyar clans, which reveals much about Muscovy's power structures at the time. In 1646, in a move proving not only the remarkable degree of internal accountability in the chancelleries but also the leverage of boyar clans, the head of the Siberian chancellery, prince N.I. Odoevskii, decided to investigate Streshnev's rule in the key border town, through which everyone had to pass on their way to Siberia.[505] The person of choice to undertake such a task was the new Tobol'sk voevoda, boyar I.I. Saltykov, a relative of tsar Aleksei's mother Marfa, who headed the investigation in person. In Muscovy's

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[503] Aleksandrov, *Vlast'*, 259-62
[504] Lantzeff, *Siberia*, 38-9.
[505] Ibid., 38

clandestine oligarchy, relying on marriage politics under cover of the tsar's virtual omnipotence[506], the family clans of the tsar's mother and of the *tsaritsa* were the two most important power groups. Saltykov had orders to send Streshnev and his sons to Turinsk during the investigation, a measure prescribed by law during *poval'nye obyski*, involving all the town and dependent on influence by litigating parties.[507] On arriving at Verkhotur'e in April 1646 during his journey to Tobol'sk, Saltykov started to investigate Streshnev's customs misdemeanours and in particular the latter's seizure of the customs documentation in the summer of 1645. This seizure had served Streshnev as a convenient means to refuse the control of his possessions, which he sent to Moscow in October, by the head of customs, K. Gogulin. While Saltykov's investigation supported the view expressed in the petitions, he could not proceed to sending Streshnev out of town. Streshnev started to get in the way of investigation and, to lead the gross insult towards its climax, declared Saltykov's decrees bogus. After both boyars had insulted each other, Saltykov set out to continue his trip to Tobol'sk; he had already decided to litigate a dishonour suit. In his desperate position, Streshnev remembered the potential support locals could offer, and while Saltykov's riverboats were still in sight, the fire-alarm bell rang in town, while bonfires were lit to provoke rumours. Streshnev attempted to incite Verkhoturians to sign a petition accusing Saltykov of setting fire to Verkhotur'e. His "advisers" "barked" at Saltykov calling him a "denigrated and not trustworthy man", while the voevoda himself called Saltykov "*boiarishkom*" (lit. "little boyar"), and, though short of invoking a sovereign's affair, used its terminology adding the term "traitor" ("*vor*").[508] On the one hand, these forms of symbolic communication and ritual interaction underlined aspects treated by Habermas as "representative public acts".[509] On the other hand, studies about honour have shown that there were forms and functions that are neither "bourgeois" nor "representative", but necessarily relied on a premodern public opinion. The focal point of public orientation was the repute of a person or group, measured at common values of modesty and righteousness.[510]

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[506] Kollmann, *Kinship*
[507] Weickhardt, "Due-Process"
[508] Aleksandrov, *Vlast'*, 261-4
[509] Rau "Öffentliche", 19
[510] Kollmann, *Honor*, 84; Rau, "Öffentliche", 19; Schreiner, Klaus; Gert Schwerhoff (eds.), *Verletzte Ehre*, Köln 1995

In the case of the two nobles at Verkhotur'e, these values had a different meaning than in other cases involving primarily cossacks. Ch.IV will inquire into such values; even without doing so, the Verkhotur'e quarrel shows that it aimed primarily at influencing public opinion in the town. Streshnev's show of strength was primarily intended to silence opposition. The unwillingness to sign the petitions, however, shows that the cossacks were not particularly impressed and well aware of the opportunities the two alternative offers of patronage opened up to them.

Verkhotur'e was not primarily a frontier town, nor was its predominant function the collection of *iasak*. Still, the turning point was reached after this outrageous behaviour, and Saltykov knew well about the unwillingness of the Verkhotur'e cossacks to defend the voevoda. It is therefore not surprising that cossacks at Verkhotur'e did not interfer when Saltykov sent *pismennyi golova* – an officer capable of keeping records – A.T. Sekerin with a detachment of cossacks to continue the investigation into Streshnev's affairs. Although Streshnev again tried to impede, the recalcitrant voevoda this time was sent under guard to Moscow. As could be expected, his clan did not fail to defend him; Streshnev even managed to have his client, B.S. Dvorianinov appointed the new voevoda of Verkhotur'e. This helped Streshnev during the investigation, when Dvorianinov from the outset blocked attempts at scrutinising his patron's rule.

While even a Saltykov could not thwart attempts to get by with impunity through patronage in Moscow, the end of the rule of Streshnev's successor shows that the *Personenverband* could. Dvorianinov, like O.I. Shcherbatyi in Tomsk, or, more successfully, Suleshev in Tobol'sk, was one of the Siberian voevodas who tried to increase the tsar's profits while at the same time pushing hard to increase their own income. Overestimating his own position, he even estranged the cossacks by his attempt to block their trade with the *iasak* people before they had collected the tribute. Locally, this double-bill of enhanced control proved overly ambitious, and cossacks addressed the issue in letters inciting their comrades in the *uezd*:

> "Boris [Dvorianinov] seeks the sovereign's profit here, and he will deprive you of everything of which once you were replete – you acquired *zipuny* (silken shirts, i.e. slaves) and without orders you rode out to the Voguls with merchandise".

In these words, there is little indication of the special concerns of the cossack elite, as Aleksandrov and Pokrovskii claim, while the apprehension of all cossacks was tackled.[511]

Also revealing of the politics of the *Personenverband* is the way Dvorianinov was challenged. The voevoda fell prey to an intrigue from a quarter he did not expect – in June, the fugitive peasant M. Kabakov, who was tortured, in his pain addressed the voevoda with the words "sovereign-tsar, have mercy", and Dvorianinov failed to correct him. Still, this affair was dormant until in October 1648 a sovereign's affair was filed by the *pod'iachii s pripis'iu* I.I. Nedoveskov accompanied by the "young" *pod'iachii*s and a group of cossacks. By accepting Kabakov's invocation, the litigants claimed somewhat belatedly, Dvorianinov had dishonoured the tsar. The next day, a delegation consisting of cossacks, *posad* people and peasants felt entitled to put the voevoda under arrest and disallow Dvorianinov all communications "while the *mir* deliberates with Ignat'ii [Nedoveskov] and Fedor" Driagin, the customs head. As during so many other Siberian rebellions, this *mir* consisted of virtually every imaginable settled social group in Verkhotur'e, but was dominated by the cossacks; it first made sure to formulate and sign litigation in the form of a petition. It was only after constituting themselves as a *Personenverband* by this act[512] that they formally declared the "*otkaz*", connecting it inextricably with the sovereign's affair; they could no longer allow themselves to be judged by Dvorianinov, since "[we] do not want to fall into disgrace".[513] This was imaginative formulation of a leitidea in handling the sovereign's word and affair, which, obtained under torture, was often not considered effective; and the *otkaz*, as mentioned in chapter I, was derived from custom though institutionalised by Kiprian.

The changing states of affairs of the *mir* were typical of this institution's instability yet viability in Siberian towns, where the frontier and frequent service in far-off places as well as the involvement of many cossacks in distant trade demanded a high degree of institutional flexibility. Once again, the *Personenverband* depicted this unpopular voevoda of Verkhotur'e as the tsar's representative, who lost his

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[511] Cf. ibid., 261-2, 265
[512] See 36-57
[513] Aleksandrov, *Vlast'*, 265-7

power when falling into disgrace, or when such a fall was perceived. Dvorianinov never won back authority in Verkhotur'e: when in February 1649 he was relieved by R.R. Vsevolozhskii, the town's population interfered with the first attempt to punish some of the rebels, making sure to beat up Dvorianinov's supporters. In the meantime, an element of due process had been observed by the customs head's official seal serving as replacement for the voevoda's – which Dvorianinov still possessed – , allowing the rebels' delegations to leave town. To underline their claim that there were two divergent normative spheres involved, cossack custom and the estate-representative principle on the one hand, and on the other hand emerging bureaucracy with its top-down power relations,[514] Aleksandrov and Pokrovskii make reference to the term "diarchy" at least twice, in this case and in the case of voevoda Eldezin of Tiumen'.[515] It is hard to see in these cases, however, that there was a diarchy in the town, since the voevoda was bereft of any real power, while cossacks relied on arguments of due process to establish their claim to bypass the voevoda. Cossacks preferred clearly-defined authority in town, and did not tolerate ambigious situations where power and the law were concerned, as might be indicated by "diarchy", as on one occasion when Saltykov ordered that Dvorianinov was to act as a colleague of Nedoveskov in the voevoda's office, repelling the voevoda at the entrance. Another petiton was formulated and signed by 48 cossacks, 18 members of the *posad*, 32 members of the postal service and 23 peasants to substantiate their claim that they could not obey the voevoda until Dvorianinov was officially relieved.

The chancellery, in turn, was impelled to take their stance seriously, and could not do so without recourse to due process to implement its decision. Unfortunately for Dvorianinov, it had taken time to decide that he was liable only for not communicating the "sovereign's word" to the chancellery, and not for accepting the homage. Even when its resolution was first to be executed, after a threat uttered by the rebels towards the former voevoda, he died in Verkhotur'e under unclear circumstances. The chancellery did not indict the deposition of the voevoda as such, but merely questioned whether an investigation in his behaviour had indeed been necessary, implicitly accepting that different leitideas rather than one official,

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[514] Ibid., 172
[515] Ibid., 265, 189

unquestionable interpretation of the sovereign's word and affair were at issue. During this interval, rebels impeded the punishment of Nedoveskov, whom the chancellery indicted for enticement to rebellion. It was only in June 1649 that twenty-six of his opponents were punished with the knout on orders issued by the new Tobol'sk voevoda.[516] Relatively close to the centre of power and European Muscovy, Verkhotur'e was far from being the pacesetter of rebellion. At the same time, trade relations nonetheless created conditions rife with institutional mechanisms[517] like the "forged decrees" or the use of the sovereign's word and affair to get rid of an unpopular administrator. Verkhotur'e also reveals, however, the dependency of all Siberian local institutions on patronage, a consideration which has not been given due weight either by Aleksandrov and Pokrovskii or generally in historical writing on Siberia.

These factors make it possible to explain why Shishkov, like so many other Siberian voevodas, could not escape investigation. In the typical chancellery Brown describes, such an outcome was unlikely. Corporate solidarity bound superiors and subordinates who partook in bribes and gift-giving while covering for one another. Nevertheless, the chancellery system was dependent on the periphery, at least on the Siberian periphery, since the *Personenverbände* were the only groups who could offer sufficient control of the fur-providing frontier. In this sense, it was not an exclusively formal hierarchy and patronage that decided over opportunities to ensure obedience to commands, but rather scaled social value, a broader concept that can take into account the power of the *Personenverband*.

As in Siberia, central power had to rely on the interests of local power brokers throughout the early modern world.[518] The Siberian cossack *Personenverbände* sought alliances with central forces, since this increased their radius of action, their opportunities for trade and their leverage vis-à-vis the voevoda or other *Personenverbände*. Such co-operation, however, could not occur by decree of the tsar. Central control depended upon the willingness and ability of the cossacks and other Siberian inhabitants to utilise central institutions for their own ends.

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[516] Ibid., 268-9
[517] Rehberg, "Institutionenwandel", 102-3
[518] Lieberman, "Transcending", 478-9; Kollmann, *Kinship*

Literacy

Implicitly or explicitly, all accounts of the Siberian administration based on the postulation of hierarchical command structures and the powerlessness of the cossacks and the general population depend upon the general assumption of cossack illiteracy. Cossacks needed such skills if they were to seize the opportunities that the chancellery's efforts at regulating Siberian affairs and the multiple default lines of noble networks offered to them. The mounting proportion of literate cossacks reflects the increasing need for these skills in their dealings and negotiations with the chancellery system, and was thus important for their ability to work the system to their advantage. This was particularly – but not exclusively – so in the eastern parts of Siberia, where, as we will see in this chapter and in chapter V, trade in furs and increasingly, Chinese wares, produced rising levels of literacy in the late seventeenth century, despite Kopylov's misgivings.[519] The level of literacy also provides an answer to the question about which part of the population was capable to check petitions, instructions, reports, and other official documents, and therefore was at least able to get directly involved in the processes of institutionalisation investigated in this chapter. No doubt this involvement was not the exclusive realm of the literate, but without them there was no access at all. The investigation of levels of literacy provides some of the general cultural background of the processes discussed in this thesis.

There are, however, different concepts of literacy, which can include higher or at least secondary education. Yet it is difficult to apply normal assumptions about literacy rates and the experience of literacy based on the experience of contemporary Western Europe to the general Russian, let alone the Siberian, situation. Almost all books printed in pre-Petrine Muscovy were religious in nature, although there were also chronicles and historical descriptions.[520] Yet, a considerable amount of secular literature in circulation in Russia was printed in Cyrillic in Lithuania.[521] From mid-century onwards, there was marked change towards more openness and new cultural

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[519] Based on a – apparently fleeting – comparison of local western and eastern Siberian annals: Kopylov, A.N., *Ocherki kul'turnoĭ zhizni Sibiri XVII – nachala XIX v.*, Novosibirsk 1974, 96

[520] Haumann, Heiko, *Geschichte Rußlands*, 177

[521] Topolska, Maria, *Czytelnik i książka w Wielkim Księstwie Litewskim w dobie Renesansu i Baroku*, Wrocław 1984

tendencies. Literacy, therefore, is understood here in the most basic sense as the capability to read and write. This was the critical skill to deal with government documents and to write or at least to sign a petition. Siberian petitions in the seventeenth century, far from indicating the powerlessness of petitioners that Roman law would have ascribed to them before a patrimonial slaveholder, were for the cossacks a means of expressing and demanding their rights and privileges. Frequent petitioning contributed to institutionalisation, while cossacks relied on these means of communication and learned to value literacy. Other incentives to become literate include provisions by the Siberian chancellery demanding that literate cossacks should be sent to collect the *iasak*, so that they could keep records of those who had paid the tribute and avoided levying it twice.[522] Even if in the middle of the seventeenth century the chancellery knowingly added that this provision should apply even where "only one literate" was available for each party; assignments were influenced by this consideration, and literacy was always a good argument for applicants.

The first available census of literacy among Siberian cossacks dates from as late as 1761. Significantly, by the middle of the eighteenth century literacy among Siberian cossacks was about four times higher than on the southern defence lines in Russia to the west of the Urals. All *sotnik*i and *ataman*s and sixty percent of the lower ranks of officers were literate, although there are no figures for the rank-and-file. This was before 1765, when the government founded a series of schools in the forts of the Siberian fortification line. The exceptional status of this achievement is underlined by the rates of neighbouring, more western garrisons of the same line: On the Don, in 1761 only seventeen percent of officers were literate, while no figures are given for the lower officer ranks.[523]

Unexpected though this achievement might appear in Siberia, there are many factors that contributed to the spread of literacy. Many outlaws, cossacks considered renegades by the government and Polish-Lithuanian prisoners of war of the Time of Troubles and the wars of 1632-4 and 1654-67 were literate and became enlisted as

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[522] "Nakaz iakutskomu voevodu 1658", *DAI* vol.4 (1851), no.46, 104-5. RGADA f.1121 op.1 no.72 l.19; no.467 l.2; no.419 l.18 (petitions). Cf. Lantzeff, *Siberia*, 12

[523] Elsewhere, literacy was even lower: Katanaev, *Kazachestvo*, 9-11

cossacks in Siberia.[524] In 1632, for example, 83 Poles were sent to serve in the southern frontier towns of Tomsk, Eniseisk and Krasnoiarsk. After the truce of Andrusovo in 1667, as already in 1634, when Polish prisoners of war were free to return home, hundreds asked to be accepted into the tsar's "eternal" service in Siberia, and in the 1680s Polish "*shliakhtichi*" still appeared on the service lists.[525] At least one of the proponents of the Selenga-rebellion in 1696 possessed four – or more – books.[526] Many of the urban rebels of 1648 were sent east, and one and a half decades later Old Believers sought refuge in Siberia, but were also exiled by the government. Literate cossacks were specially assigned as well as prepared on a case-to-case base in Siberia, as literate men were needed to describe expeditions. Handing down the knowledge of writing to their sons was a necessary precondition of status preservation, and achieved in the same way as in the families of Moscow *d'iaki.* [527]

Data emanating from my database contains details of 1,668 cossacks[528] from Irkutsk and its *prisud* during the 1690s. I have counted every cossack as literate who was able to write at least the signature formula applicable to petitions and other documents. Such were the *poruchnye zapisi* and *otpisi* (receipts) cossacks signed to confirm their assignation of their next year's salary to a merchant, voevoda, *pod'iachii* or another cossack in exchange for receiving the money in advance, presumably to pay off a loan, to pay rent or to invest in an expedition..[529] Alternative formulations read: "*K sei chelobitnoi vmesto [name, surname] po ego veleniiu [name, surname] ruku prilozhil*" or the shorter variant, if the undersigned was literate: "*K sei chelobitnoi [name, surname] ruku prilozhil*"[530] Out of 168 signatures I have analysed, twenty-four belonged to non-cossacks – *promyshlennye*, church *d'iachki*, *posad*, *guliashchie* – thirty-eight cases could not be classified. 106 cossacks and officers from *desiatnik* to *syn boiarskii* could write their signature and the

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[524] Bachrushin, *Trudy*, vol.3,1, 163-5; Ogloblin, *Obozrenie*, pt. 1, 301; pt. 3, 61-63, 115 Butsinskii, *Zaselenie*, 200 Leshchenko, G.F., *Pereselenie iz Belorussii v Povolzh'e i Sibir'*, Avtoref. dis., Minsk 1983; Emel'ianov, N.F., "Tomskie sluzhilye liudi "litva" v XVII-pervoi chetverti XVIII v.", in: *Problemy istoricheskoi demografii SSSR*, Tomsk 1982, vyp. 2; Appolova, N.G., *Choziaistvennoe osvoenie Priirtysh'ia*, Moscow 1976, 76-7; Aleksandrov, *Vlast'*, 84-5

[525] Ibid., 85

[526] RGADA f.1121 st.429 l.45 (investigation): *syn boiarskii* Petr Arsen'ev.

[527] Katanaev, *Kazachestvo*, 13; Huttenbach, "Penetration", 95, 99-100

[528] These include double entries for individuals allowing to track their careers and biographies. However, this does not affect the numbers cited.

[529] RGADA f.1121 op.1 no.317 (28 receipts, Jan-Apr 1695)

[530] Ibid. no.462 l.5 ob. (petition)

appropriate formula in their individual handwritings. There are also thirteen other literate men who were most likely cossacks, while six of them bore surnames of known cossacks in the region, though it cannot be proven that they were related. This data is not comprehensive since I have analysed only those files which yielded the greatest number of signatures and only took into account files of relevance for my thesis.

There were eight (seven) literate *piatidesiatniki*, fourteen rank-and-file *desiatniki* and three mounted *desiatniki*, and ten more rank-and-file mounted cossacks. On top of these cossacks there were seven literate *deti boiarskie*, who can be counted as cossacks. The bulk of literate cossacks constituted more than fifty-nine rank-and-file *riadovye* cossacks, not even including the *desiatniki*, who did not differ much in status. Considering their main function was accompanying transports, this is not surprising. However, there were also some literate mounted cossacks. Twenty-five literate cossacks of all ranks had a stake in trade, perhaps somewhat less than expected, but this may be due to missing evidence such as unproven kinship to merchants as well as the fact that the level of trade transactions was not necessarily reflected by literacy – tax-free trade would not usually be mentioned.

Out of a hundred literate cossacks, just thirty-three lived in Irkutsk and Verkholensk, eleven are of unclear abode, and two were from Idinsk. This bias in favour of the Transbaikal is due to the fact that many sources in the Irkutsk archive are concerned with the Transbaikal, yet there is no reason to expect fewer literate cossacks in Irkutsk and north of the Baikal than in the southern frontier towns.

In the vast majority of cases the lifespans of the literate cossacks I have found overlap in the late 1690s, allowing a comparison with the available census data. Only eleven cases occur earlier than 1690 reaching as far back as the 1670s. There are two cases of rank-and-file manifest no later than 1694-1695. Eighteen literate cossacks could be traced only in 1696, among them there are two cossack sons, one mounted cossack, five *desiatniki*, and one *piatidesiatnik*. One case remains unclear, but is most likely related to the late 1690s. All other literate cossacks are evident during the immediate years surrounding the date of the relevant census in 1699, i.e. 1698-1700, or sixty-eight cossacks of all ranks. Five of the *deti boiarskie* are evident during the

period of the census, one (Iurii Kryzhanovskii) was killed by the rebels at the border near Nerchinsk in 1697.[531]

Ninety-two literate *sluzhilye* including *deti boiarskie* are evident in the period 1696-1700. This is the most relevant number of all the available data, since it is hard to see how a large part of those in the pre-1698 sample could have left Irkutsk or died. I also count cossack sons and one retired, since they were likely to continue in service or teach their sons. In any case, the data is sufficient to conclude that literacy among cossacks was surprisingly high. According to the census conducted in 1699, there were thirteen homes of *dvoriane* and *deti boiarskie* in Irkutsk *prisud* and 939 homes of "*voenno-sluzhilye liudi*".[532] While the lower margin of the level of literacy among cossacks in Irkutsk *prisud* of roughly ten percent can be established from these figures, the upper margin is less clear. It is not unlikely that this figure may have reached levels found in Russia otherwise only in Moscow, where the literate population did not exceed thirteen percent.[533] The data allows the conclusion that already in the 1690s already literacy was by far not restricted to officers, a limitation Carol B. Stevens observed, by comparison, in the Belgorod army files she investigated.[534]

The Regalian Salutation

The terminology of the regalian salutation illuminates important aspects of the nature of authority in Muscovy. Contained in any document used in the Muscovite chancelleries, and in particular in the petitions and reports used for communication between the populace and the ruler, the regalian salutation has inspired vivid discussion as well as dogmatic positions among both observers and historians. Contemporary travellers from Western Europe were appalled by the sight of Muscovites "knocking their forehead" in front of the tsar, as the literal translation of the phrase "*biti chelom*" runs. They also remarked that by calling themselves the

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[531] RGADA f.214 st.1424; f.1121 op.1 nos. 68, 76, 82, 130, 164, 360, 317, 381, 402, 403, 405, 415, 419, 420, 422, 429, 462, 467, 468; op.2 no.233 (petitions and receipts)

[532] Vodarskii, Ia.E., "Chislennost' russkogo naseleniia Sibiri XVII-XVIII vv.", in: *Russkoe naselenie Pomor'ia*, 194-213, 202.

[533] Mironov, Boris N., "The Development of Literacy in Russia", *History of Education Quarterly* vol.31, 2 (1991), 229-252, here 252

[534] Stevens, Carol B., "Belgorod – Notes on Literacy and Language", *RH* vol.7 (1980) no.1/2, 113-24

"*kholop*" of the tsar, Russians abased themselves and abdicated any rights they had, since this term was usually translated as "slave".[535]

Since the middle of the seventeenth century, there has been a dispute about the correct translation of these terms. The older historiography understood the formal address in petitions as an expression of the unconditional submission of the tsar's subjects to his powers, following the interpretations of oriental powers as "despotic" or "patrimonial". As recent scholars have established, the juxtaposition of "oriental" and "Christian" or "European" rulership was an invention of the enlightenment, when it was used to warn of certain tendencies in French government perceived as "absolutist". While writers such as Bodin and Montesquieu had little actual insight into the dealings of Asian governments, mobilising racist sentiments in the early colonial capitals was a rewarding way of influencing the public. *Bit' chelom* or "to knock one's forehead" was a direct calque from the *kou tou* customary in Chinese administration, which Muscovy encountered via Mongol intermediaries. In its original form, the *kou tou* hardly expressed oriental despotism. At the time of the lending of this term, during the Mongol suzerainty in the thirteenth century, after centuries of prosperity and openness of Chinese civilisation, the age of increasing seclusion during the Ming and Manchu dynasties was still far away. Conditions under the latter dynasties contributed not the least to Jesuit missionary descriptions of despotism. Already under the Han, however, a civil service had developed which, despite political unification, allowed for administrative decentralisation. The Chinese civil service of scholar-administrators governed a prosperous China for centuries.[536] These observations serve to remind us that a term's etymology and actual meanings at a point of time and in a particular place are at best loosely related. Thus, *biti chelom* was the appropriate address by a slave to his master in European Muscovy up to at least the early seventeenth century, but it was also used in more equal and even in inverse relationships. Thus, the Irkutsk *syn boiarskii* Ivan Arsen'ev addressed his brother Petr, who had been awarded the same rank, in this way in one of the very few private letters surviving,. Petr wrote a short notice on the back of the letter, addressed to a rank-and-file cossack, which commences:

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[535] Poe, "'Slaves'?", 594-8
[536] Ostrowski, *Muscovy*, 87

"Brother Petr Ermolin, greetings (*zdravstvui*), Petr Arsen'ev *chelom b'et.*"[537]

Il'insk rebel cossack Ivan Pinega used the same term to address his fellow rebels when he reminded them of their duties:

"To our *Gospoda* [in the text: Gd^{s}am] the Udinsk *piatidesiatniki* and *desiatniki* and all rank-and-file mounted and foot cossacks, cossack Ivashko Grigor'ev Pinega from Il'insk ostrog *chelom b'et...*"[538]

Although historians have long ignored such observations, recent studies on the regalian salutation have begun to challenge older views. Marshall Poe deems a peculiar patrimonial gloss of its social terminology in many respects convincing, but observes evolving meanings in the seventeenth century. The institution of slavery, which flourished in Muscovy until the late seventeenth century used the term "*kholop*" to denote a slave.[539] According to foreign travellers, slaves and serfs often prostrated themselves before their masters in a gesture also called "*biti chelom*".[540] In this context, Iurii Krizhanich made important remarks: "To be tsar is to serve God, but to be slave of the tsar of one's own people, this is honourable and is actually a kind of freedom."[541] This statement, however troubling it seemed to contemporary Western eyes, adds two aspects to the image of the tsar in Muscovy: In a society of scaled social value, where honour served as social cement for society, it signified a difference in status between an ordinary *kholop* and the *kholop* of the tsar. To be the tsar's *kholop* was not only honourable, it also conveyed a notion of freedom and reciprocal obligations that bound both tsar and *kholop*.[542] As in medieval west-European customary law, thus, the tsar's *kholopy* were seen as privileged servants of the monarch, who, in case of rebellion, enjoyed the right to be accepted back to their suzerain as equal vassals once they were ready to repent.[543] While this parallel to medieval Western Europe calls into question the dominant patrimonial

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[537] Aleksandrov, "Materialy", 375 (letters)

[538] RGADA f.1121 op.1 no.378, l.43 (letter). The common abbreviation for *gosudar* and *gospodar* is *gdsr*.

[539] Hellie, *Slavery*. "*Kholop*" in legal contexts, see Kaiser, *The Laws of Rus'*; Grekov, *Sudebniki*; Hellie, *Law Code*. Hellie considers indentured labourers as slaves in a wide sense. In this sense, however, there were "slaves" (for example *Knechte*) in almost all Western societies.

[540] Poe, "Slaves?", 598

[541] Mordukhovich, Lev M., "Iz rukopis'nogo nasledstva Iu. Krizhanicha", 185

[542] Kivelson, „Bitter ", 112-4

[543] Althoff, Gerd, "Das Privileg der deditio", in: idem, *Spielregeln der Politik im Mittelalter*, Darmstadt 1997, 99-125. Cf. Perrie, "Outlawry"; idem, "Cossack 'Tsareviches' in Seventeenth-Century Russia", *FzOG* vol.56 (2000), 243-256 on related privileges.

interpretations, and emphasises the right of free departure, it was no more relevant in the seventeenth century, except to some degree in Siberia, where cossacks frequently left service and were accepted back into it.[544]

In a different environment, a term could change its connotations. *Kholop* in the Siberian context since 1623/1624 indicated the illegal ownership of natives.[545] While the tsar's decrees were not always obeyed, cossacks used *kholop* as a derisory term to signify the illegal ownership of slaves. Siberian cossacks called native servants *devka*, as many of them lived as their concubines.[546] The more common terms applied to male slaves were *iasyr'* or *pogromnye inozemtsy* to mark their customary right to own them as booty, which was however not fully endorsed by the chancellery.[547] They did so even if they used them as a means of payment or of raising credit.[548]

Prosecution of those who enslaved natives and sold them in other towns was efficient as a part of the government policy of protecting *iasak*-payers. There were very few cases of slaves sold on the market in Siberia, where the slave-holders were often Bukharans and nomads, and prices reflected this relative scarcity. One voevoda, who had left his Tatar slave-girl with his in-laws west of the Urals before leaving for Krasnoiarsk, had been warned by his kin of the possibility of Moscow launching a high-level investigation if he misbehaved in Siberia.[549] Most likely, there was a certain grey market among local cossacks, although it has left few traces. On the other hand, rebel cossacks were opposed to voevodas exporting *iasyri*, and this cannot be explained by coercion or a military command structure.[550] Although individual cossacks did have an interest in selling their captives, implementation was facilitated by the collective interest of the cossacks in entertaining good trade and service relations with the sovereign – and in acceptable yields of fur *iasak*. Thus, in Siberia, the concept *kholop* was not employed to denote native slaves, nor was there an extensive slave trade among Siberian cossacks. Thus there was a slightly different

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[544] Aleksandrov, *Vlast'*, 329-40
[545] Hellie, *Slavery*, 76, 82, 70
[546] Collins, "Subjugation", 37-54
[547] Pokrovskii, *Tomsk*, 98; Aleksandrov, *Vlast'*, 223-4; Nikitin, *Sluzhilye*, 192. Ogloblin, *Obozrenie* pt.2, 60-3; pt.1, 194
[548] RGADA f.1121 op.1 no.67 ll.108-9 (report); op.2, no.147 l.1 (petition)
[549] Hellie, *Slavery*, 102, 343, 348, 597
[550] Pokrovskii, *Tomsk*, 98; Aleksandrov, *Vlast'*, 223-4

background to the concept of *kholop* employed in the regalian salutation than in other parts of Muscovy.

With regard to Siberian Russians, *kholop* was used to indicate unlawful deprivation of liberty rather than legitimate possession. The former cossack Fedor Ivanov *syn* Cherkasov in 1696 gave a vivid description of the methods used by *golova* Afonasii Beiton to enslave him:

> "...he invited me into his home since I am a tailor and filled me with alcohol until I was drunk. By his power he indented me, your *kholop*, stating that I, your *kholop*, marry, live and work in Afonasii's place with the wife and children and I, your *kholop* in a drunken state signed the document under the influence of alcohol. Afonasii married me against my will to his bought servant. That girl of Russian origin, who was also drowsy, was a slave (*poraboshchena v kholopstvo ponevoli*) who lived in his house in eternal dependency ..."[551]

There is a contrast in this text between the Cherkasov who ascribed to himself the honourable title of the tsar's "*kholop tvoi*", and his description of his wife as "involuntarily enslaved (*poraboshchena*) into *kholopstvo* (*ponevoli*)"; Cherkasov thereby indicated that *kholopstvo* was not equal to abject slavery, but only *kholopstvo ponevoli*. Accordingly, voluntary *kholopstvo* could go along with self-esteem.[552]

Muscovites viewed the *gosudar'*, the sovereign, as the source of justice who decided in the last instance, by virtue of his anointment.[553] Siberians, while not averse to such ideas, often added a threatening edge to their petitions, as the coda of the Tomsk petition of 15th June 1649 to tsar Aleksei made clear:

> "Compassionate sovereign, tsar and grand prince Aleksei Mikhailovich...! Confer on us, sovereign, the Lord's Anointed, your absent *kholopi* and orphans, your just compassion, look at us, and order that we, your *kholopi* and orphans will be saved from prince Osip's and Mikhail's expulsion and oppression...and do not let yourself believe his false reports about us, your *kholopi*..., since they want to destroy us without leaving a rest and shed our innocent blood and lay your sovereign's distant frontier waste."[554]

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[551] RGADA f.1121 op.2 no.164 l.9 (petition). Cf. Hellie, *Slavery*, 93
[552] Kivelson, "Bitter", 112-4
[553] Lukin, *Predstavleniia*, 253-6
[554] Aleksandrov, *Vlast'*, 318

At first sight, this statement seems to confirm expectations nurtured by the use of sovereign's affair west of the Urals. The next sub-chapter, however, will challenge this view and look for an explanation of the dissimilar uses of this institution.

The Sovereign's Word and Affair

The sovereign's word and affair is a well-known punitive norm for infringements of the security of the person of the tsar, relating to financial, political, and even magical misdemeanours. The relevant articles in the *Ulozhenie* contain stipulations against treason and insurrectionary plots mainly intended to defend the tsar and his officials' body, honour, and power.[555] The sole exception from the rule that disrespectful or aggressive behaviour towards these persons must be punished severely is made in case it is proven conclusively that "a small number" of people approached an offical in order to submit a petition accusing him or other officials for improper behaviour, not showing an aggressive or insolent attitude.[556] In recent years, the sovereign's word and affair has seen numerous re-evaluations that place it at the very core of their respective approaches to Muscovite society. However, as I will argue in this chapter, while historians have reasonably seen denunciations under these articles as proof of Muscovite popular monarchism, its institutional and ritual aspects structured channels of appeal and public interaction that open up new insights into the ways in which Muscovite institutional culture was harnessed to Siberian conditions of trade, negotiations, and the limited public sphere.[557]

In looking at the sovereign's word and affair, most historians have relied on Novombergskii's collection that assembled almost exclusively cases of the sovereign's word from the central areas.[558] In his much-cited essay Keenan has called the "sovereign's word and deed" one of the characteristic elements of Muscovite political culture. Although, according to Keenan, in these proceedings the state prosecuted only trifles, it was done with "hair-raising earnestness and brutality",

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[555] Hellie, *Ulozhenie*, ch..2 art.1-21

[556] Ibid., art. 22

[557] I am using this term in the sense attributed to it by the "Theory and analysis of institutional mechanisms (TAIM)": Rehberg et al., "Abschlußbericht für die DFG", Ms., Dresden 1996; Rehberg, "Institutionenwandel", 101-4.

[558] Novombergskii, N.Ia., *'Slovo i delo gosudarevo'*, vols.1-2, Tomsk/Moscow 1909-1919. See Ditiatin, *Rol'*, and Torke, *Staatsbedingte.*

in precarious times aiming to "protect not the real safety and dignity of the tsar but the myth of his all-embracing and all-knowing power". In periods of political stability cases introduced with "words" or "deeds of the sovereign" receded.[559] The quality of denunciations prevalent in Novombergskii's collection stresses the tendency of the absolutist state to subdue society by dividing it. Individual actors, many abject prisoners among them, informed the authorities about their fellows, to gain a fleeting alleviation of the brutal conditions they lived in. Since the sovereign's word and affair was a norm that safeguarded the tsar and his family, it stipulated that litigants were to be brought to Moscow – thus they could by-pass the loathed administration.

The less well-known Siberian cases are different, however: in Siberia, the invocation of the sovereign's word, more often the sovereign's affair, served to depose the voevoda. Therefore it is no surprise that Pokrovskii challenges Keenan's interpretation, emphasising the importance of the sovereign's word and affair by construing it as a mechanism for feedback from the provinces, since the voevoda administration was corrupt and diverted revenues from the fur trade to the voevodas' own pockets. He observed that Siberians used this direct line to Moscow or otherwise to their superiors in higher-order, *uezd* towns or in Tobol'sk to challenge voevodas and take over the administration during rebellions. In his interpretation he otherwise stuck to established models of the Russian population's "utopian" or "naïve" belief in the "good" tsar, which were bound to be disappointed, yet constituted an abundant resource which even the tsarist regime took until 1917 to exhaust.[560]

While generally agreeing with Pokrovskii's findings, Perrie has altered the emphasis put on the naivety of Muscovites to include other elements, such as negotiations centring on the *zhalovan'e* Moscow paid to cossacks. She incorporated these observations into a model characteristic of the region she studied in detail, the southern frontier, where cossacks offered their military services and expertise for a rather meagre ration supplementing what they acquired during campaigns and as steppe hunters, fishers and beekeepers. She contrasted these southern cossacks with

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[559] Keenan, Edward L., "Muscovite Political Folkways", *RR* vol.45 (1986), 115-81, here: 147
[560] Pokrovskii, "Sibirskie materialy"; see also Aleksandrov, *Vlast'*, 224-33

the town rebellions "in the name of the tsar" which Pokrovskii had described: Perrie's cossacks were preoccupied with pretenders. An important contribution to the interpretation of the sovereign's word and affair is her observation that the traditional pattern of relationships between the cossacks and the government described by Khodarkovsky – involving petitions, promises, negotiations, threats, shows of strength, and concessions – fitted this pattern of dependency well.[561] On the other hand, the tsar and Moscow depended on the cossacks for their costly military assistance as well. On a more general level of analysis, the rhetoric of the tsar's paternalistic benevolence towards the cossacks, and of the cossacks' humble petitioning for pardon and rewards provided an appropriate ideological framework for their relationship, in which the 'monarchist populism' of the authorities corresponded to the 'popular monarchism' of the cossacks, and helped to reinforce it.[562]

The sovereign's word and affair facilitated appeal against local court and voevoda decisions by some of its implications. The high level of attention afforded to any case in this category had its origins in the wave of pretenders during the Time of Troubles, who rallied substantial mass support, in particular from the cossacks of the Don and Southern Russian regions by claiming to be the legitimate tsar or disappeared tsarevich. Their aim was not rebellion against feudalism, but rather the notion – typical of early modern Europe – of a "world turned upside-down" in which not the system itself changed, but only the relative position of individuals within it. Since in sixteenth and seventeenth-century Muscovy, all decisions at least nominally had to be made by the tsar, only the claim to be the tsar gave a person sufficient power to challenge existing authorities.[563] As central authority was reconstituted, it responded to this challenge by closely investigating each and every utterance of improper words referring to the tsar or popular imitations of the majesty, even if this appeared futile. If a known robber uttered the words "I know a sovereign's word" in prison, that was enough to launch an investigation and immediately transport him away from local influence into the capital. The approach at grassroots level was

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[561] Khodarkovsky, "Razin", 9
[562] Perrie, "'Tsareviches'", 243-256; idem, *Pretenders*, 250
[563] Lukin, *Predstavleniia*, 168-9

Moscow's answer to the perils of a vast frontier area threatened by nomad incursions, where any attempt at building a more secure border meant that everybody had to be armed and every hand was needed for defence. The lack of natural borders meant that an effort at strengthening frontier defences brought about an increase in vulnerable, insecure communities suffering from inadequacy of supply as well as cultivable land, since open fields could hardly be defended. During the seventeenth-century effort at fortifying the southern borders, this meant that anomic situations spread just beyond the fortifications of the day, while unrest was prevalent in the area behind the *zaseki*. Any spark could ignite a boundless area and besides boyars and gentry, it was ordinary peasants and townspeople, suffering from the rebels' depredations, who, in the end, often overthrew them. This experience also made pretenderism unpopular at the end of the Time of Troubles and explains the attention to seemingly futile denunciations.[564]

Even in Siberia, Moscow sought to punish derisory speeches about the tsar, or just the omission of parts of the tsar's title in a document. Nevertheless, the Siberian chancellery did not care to bring any of the perpetrators of this category to Moscow.[565] Yet if there was as little military threat to Moscow from its small, scattered and extremely distant bases in Siberia as there was a military threat to Siberian towns from the centre, Moscow still depended on their loyalty. It needed Siberia's resources to wage war in the west and relied on them during the crucial seventeenth century. The chancellery as well as Siberian cossacks reflected this difference in conditions in the approach adopted towards the *gosudarevo delo*. Where financial aspects outweighed the attempt to "turn the world upside-down", attention focused on machinations with the funds that were made available to cossacks and voevodas.

Apart from this, there were other conditions that facilitated the transformation of this institution into a viable mechanism for litigation and appeal. The very ample field of meanings attached to "*delo*" has contributed to this transformation; it has also led historians to translate it as "deed"; I am translating it here as "affair" to highlight the main meaning or nexus Siberian cossacks had in mind when they invoked the

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[564] Perrie, *Pretenders*, 250; Davies, "Village", 481-501
[565] Pokrovskii, "Slovu i delu", 50

"*gosudarevo delo*". Besides its implication of treason and related phenomena, the *gosudarevo delo* denoted an obligation to work, in the same vein as *monastyrskoe delo*, *gorodovoe delo*, *ostrozhnoe delo*. An instructive side aspect of the combination of the term *delo* meaning "craft" as well as "livelihood" is provided by *delo barkhatnoe, zheleznoe, zhivopisnoe, zolotoe, ikonnoe, pushechnoe, chasovoe* etc. There were many intermittent uses of this combination: What is usually interpreted as "sovereign's affair" thus can be translated as "working for the sovereign" as in

> "Simon is always occupied with the sovereign's affairs of icon-painting"[566]

The most common meaning of *gosudarevo delo* in Siberia during this period was a service assignment or mission to cossacks, chancery staff or the voevoda. Pokrovskii refuted attempts by M.N. Tikhomirov and Man'kov to trace these meanings – what analytically can be termed the "affairs of state" on the one hand and the denunciation for treason or political crime on the other hand – in the text of the *Ulozhenie* statute of 1649, which codified this double meaning, noting that there was no basis in the law for such a distinction. He concluded that this inconsequence and, to the modern mind, confusion in the text reflected the

> "contradictory early stage of the founding of an important juridical terminology connected to the deep processes of social awareness as well as to the very pungent realities of contemporary political and class struggles".[567]

Perceptive as this interpretation is, it does not explain the way in which these "deep" processes functioned. It is also questionable whether this confusing condition later on changed much; in the seventeenth century, the impression that this institution was in the early stages of its development and somewhat confusing is created by its transformation: the cossacks found this institution well suited to their needs in particular since it covered such a broad and even contradictory array of meanings, provisions of law, and the custom and institutions of their own service to the tsar. All these partly diverging rules and stipulations could be used as leitideas according to daily needs varying among localities, social groups and time in a vast and diverging empire, to interpret the institution. In this way, norms taken from cossack custom, such as the *otkaz*, could gain tacit acceptance through their continual use in service

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[566] *SRIa*, entry „delo",no.1, 3
[567] Pokrovskii, "Slovu", 59; Hellie, *Ulozhenie*, ch. IX, art. 1; ch. X, art. 1, 2, 24, 147, 149, 150.

relations[568] and thus transform the institution. After the rebellions of mid-century, it became particularly clear that despite all the efforts to the contrary made in the 1649 *Ulozhenie*, such as restricting access to the tsar, or the norm barring *skop i zagovor*, prohibiting rebellions and mass assemblies[569] and providing much of the leitideas of the rebels' opponents, in Siberia at least it was accepted that the 'tsar's dignity' could be saved by publicly ousting his representative, the voevoda.

This was facilitated by the fact that cossacks could claim that they relied on the "true fonts" of the sovereign's affair, in their case their claim to be vigilant for the sovereign's profit[570] and to abide by the norm limiting the prohibition of assemblies – in case it could be established conclusively during investigation that the defendants approached an official not as part of an insurrectionary plot, but to submit a petition[571] – thereby making it difficult for their opponents to claim that they were traitors. This state of affairs was not conditioned by an "early stage" of this institution's development, but rather by the needs of empire. In the Muscovite empire, there were so many diverging needs and conditions of life, so that an overarching institution such as the sovereign's word and affair had to undergo changes according to the place and social group in which it was used. After all, establishing an institution is very costly in economic and social terms – many people rely and build their future on it. [572] Specific expectations such as privileged treatment of these cases, overriding the hierarchy, and direct access to the tsar contributed to its esteem among the population. At the same time, however, a certain amount of confusion in this juridical term where the individual case was described should not deter us from acknowledging that such confusion could be useful in an empire. To be indistinguishable at first sight from litigants with radically different needs and opinions was useful in an empire that put a premium on outward conformity. As this chapter will show, this uniformity in appearance did not deter Siberian cossacks from

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[568] See ch.I

[569] *DAI* II, 2. 1613 g.; Hellie, *1649 Ulozhenie*, chapter II, art. 18-21

[570] Aleksandrov, *Vlast'*, 223-4, 248-9; Rezun, *Prichulyme*, 59-68; Pokrovskii, *Tomsk*, 98, 99; Nikitin, *Sluzhilye*, 192

[571] Hellie, *1649 Ulozhenie*, chapter II, art. 22

[572] Krasner, S.D., "Sovereignty. An Institutional Perspective", *CPS* vol.21 no.1 (April 1988), 81; Offe, Claus, *Designing Institutions for East European Transitions*, Vienna 1994, 25-6. See 86.

pursuing their needs successfully. Rather than a proof for the cossacks' naivety, this shows that they made good use of the opportunities afforded by the tsar's populism.

The Muscovite appeal system took into account changing positions of power, rather than permanently enfranchising certain groups and guaranteeing their status over other concerns. In an extended frontier area, such as Muscovy's south, this constituted an enormous advantage. Throughout the "rolling" border, communities were raised from peasant status to servitor, only to lose their status again when the border fortifications moved. In this area, the sovereign's affair not only empowered elites, but also communities. Similar to Siberian cossacks, these servitors made a common stand to depose their voevoda, and denounced him to the chancellery. Trade, as it was in Siberia, was therefore only one economic and social background among others that provided communities with sufficient bargaining power. In Muscovy's south, the isolated frontier condition of a force that was indispensable for protection against nomad assaults granted a degree of autonomy and leverage. However, in the case of the southern border forts, which were unconnected to trade, inconclusive evidence suggests there were fewer successful challenges to voevodas than in Siberia.[573] Moreover, in the Left Bank late in the seventeenth century, well-connected cossack officers used the "sovereign's word and affair" against ordinary cossacks and peasants in the process of enserfment when frontier conditions ceased to provide significant income.[574]

In clear contrast to the practice in the Left Bank, "free" ordinary Don or Zaporozhian cossacks were not immune to the appeal system. This might be puzzling at first sight, since many of them fled from worsening conditions in the Left Bank and elsewhere, yet leitideas changed locally according to the social conditions. In these areas, it was often the cossack group who used their former leaders as bargaining chips in negotiations with Moscow, since social status was irrelevant. They enjoyed this bargaining power as long as the cossack *Personenverband* was immune to considerations of expert knowledge and the related boost to recognition of social status independent of the aims of the *Personenverband*, which such

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[573] Glaz'ev, "Mestnoe". Davies, "Village", 481-501

[574] Rustemeyer, Angela, "Ukrainians in Seventeenth-Century Political Trials", *Journal of Ukrainian Studies* vol.24 (1999) no.2, 37-58, here: 43-58

knowledge could give in more complex armies. When a rebel leader no longer seemed capable of embodying the aims of the *Personenverband*, and became a liability, they often denounced him as a traitor and exchanged him for a generous reward. Subsequently his former followers were redeemed through service.[575]

In Siberia, Muscovite policies encountered a frontier in several different ways that also meant different conditions and needs, and therefore a tendency to change the contents, or leitideas of the sovereign's affair in denunciations: Less fortified than the southern steppe rim of European Muscovy[576], the southern Siberian frontier during the seventeenth century became punctuated by a loose series of isolated forts, separated by hundreds of miles from each other. The most southern outposts, such as Kuznetsk or Krasnoiarsk, found themselves encircled by nomadic peoples. Yet another kind of frontier comprised the whole of the conquered territory and this was not exclusively due to the feeble grip of the tsar's forts and towns dotted over thousands of miles throughout the Northern Asian territories. While most of the Tatars collaborated with the new power, the further the Russians went to the fur-rich North and Northeast, the less adapted were the semi-nomadic peoples of Siberia, the Tungus, Samoyeds and Koryaks to notions of suzerainty and taxes derived from the Mongol Empire. They were as little inclined to consider an oath of allegiance as anything more than a loose temporary peace or trade agreement as were the nomads of the south. While it was easy to send punitive forces against the more settled, those with a nomadic or semi-nomadic life-style frequently evaded predations as well as attempts to enforce levies. Tribute imposed on the natives by decree therefore locally took the form of barter, which took into account the superior power of the Russians and their promises of security, as well as their better access to markets. By decree, the government barred access for merchants to the *iasak* people before the *iasak* was taken.[577] Yet since control relied on the loyalty of the cossack *Personenverband* as well as the voevodas, their collaboration was hard to avoid. In 1658, the Siberian chancellery admonished the new voevoda of Iakutsk to make sure he did not repeat the practice that, as the chancellery reminded him, had led Moscow to establish

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[575] Perrie, "Outlawry", 530-42; idem, "Cossack 'Tsareviches' in Seventeenth-Century Russia", *FzOG* vol.56 (2000), 243-256

[576] On the southern frontier, see Khodarkovsky, *Steppe*.

[577] Slezkine, *Mirrors*, 7

Iakutsk. In the 1630s cossacks from the southern town of Eniseisk had forced the Yakuts into submission and paying the *iasak*. However, taking advantage of the situation they had deprived the tsar of the best furs by bartering with their own merchandise before collecting the *iasak*. The voevoda of Eniseisk, "befriending them" accepted the cossacks' gifts.[578] Thus, two overlapping frontiers combined to make the Russian forts and towns look like isolated spots in an area where claims of suzerainty on the part of the tsar and even the cossacks went far beyond the actual ability to enforce them. However, it was not just the natives who resisted closer control; in trying to deal with the natives, the cossacks could not be controlled tightly. The garrisons of the towns and forts themselves pursued their own interests, and whether collaborating with the voevoda or resisting him, time and again escaped Moscow's sway.

In this extended area of weak state control, Moscow nevertheless pursued some of its most profitable economic activities – the fur trade and the Chinese caravan trade. A good part of this trade was conducted as government trade; the government therefore was keenly interested in ensuring loyalty throughout the Siberian frontiers. Muscovite policies in Siberia are therefore best understood by investigating the ways the chancellery and the voevodas handled the issue of loyalty. To be considered loyal was crucial in an area where all boundaries were in a state of flux, where private and state spheres were not separated and personal as well as group conflicts were therefore fought as pitched information battles for the most loyal profile, best expressed in the form of the sovereign's word or affair.

On the frontier, loyalty was primarily owed to the *Personenverband*, while loyalty to the tsar often had to be artificially manufactured *post factum*. In 1657, a group of eighteen cossacks with their *piatidesiatnik* Ivan Pavlov was chased into the forests between Ilimsk and the Amur after *syn boiarskii* Kurbat Ivanov had proclaimed a sovereign's affair against them:

> "I wrote immediately to *syn boiarskii* Fedor Pushchin and the Amur and Iakutsk cossacks, to Ilimsk fort *sotnik* Iakov Antsyforov and to the cossacks, and merchants and trappers, so that we, after meeting, could pursue them all together, may God grant it."

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[578] *DAI* vol.4 (1851), 104-5

In the ensuing battle two cossacks were wounded, while the "traitors" were captured by the pursuing *Personenverband* comprising about three times as many men. Kurbat maintained that only when all the captured cossacks' effects had been listed, would the *Personenverband* be given its due: They

"distributed among themselves, for they need motivation to chase such traitors again."

According to his report, Kurbat Ivanov was not involved in the decision-making process leading to the split in the cossack group and the separate campaign of Pavlov's men. Kurbat claimed he knew about the "traitors" from a letter Fedor Pushchin had sent to him, asserting that they had stolen Pushchin's and his men's equipment and supplies when leaving their group, and had stripped merchants of their goods on their way to the Amur.[579] It is characteristic for this report that it omits all details about the decision-making process leading to the split of Pushchin's men. These internal processes of the *Personenverband* remained opaque for the outside world; at least as long as there was no counterallegation and no outright investigation, since claimants of the true interpretation of the sovereign's affair asserted that they relied on the true sources, which could not be discussed.[580] In the frontier area, the outcome of competition between and within cossack groups was affected little by outside forces; thus the "sovereign's affair" served as a rallying-cry uttered by those who felt they could make use of the Russian authorities and wanted to make it clear to the emerging *Personenverband* that they were ready to take responsibility for ensuing action. As an institutional mechanism, the sovereign's affair facilitated integration of the empire.

Whereas in this case Pushchin found someone else to declare a "sovereign's affair", restore leadership and report to Moscow and the voevoda of Eniseisk, this was not always so easy. Ten years later, in a similar yet rather unfortunate course of events he was among the *deti boiarskie* and "no-names" accused by rebellious Iakutsk cossacks and *desiatniki* of appropriating and exploiting all positions of *prikazchiki* in the small forts of the Iakutsk *uezd*; moreover, they failed to provide adequate leadership. Pushchin faced charges of losing up to ninety men at Okhotsk and in the Amur region. Yet under investigation he showed considerable dexterity in

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[579] Ibid., 89-90
[580] Rehberg, "Institutionenwandel", 101-4

defending himself. He claimed that during the campaign to the river Argun he had shipped upstream for ten days, but could not find any natives. When he ran out of supplies, he asserted, he returned to the mouth of the Argun and set up a *zimov'e*. Forty-three cossacks left him and fled to the Amur. He followed them, as he stated, stayed with them for the winter "among the Giliaks" and in the spring, with the *iasak* treasure they had collected, and persuaded twelve of them to return with him to Iakutsk. The others stayed behind, but "without him" the natives killed them, except for two cossacks, who later returned to Iakutsk. Pushchin's report exemplifies the typical behaviour of the *Personenverband* which threatened to judge Pushchin's leadership on the Argun as no longer successful, while the Amur was a nearby and tempting aim. Whether or not he indeed risked all in winter and waited until they left him or rather prudently yielded to their wishes, next spring Pushchin could persuade some of them to return to Iakutsk to earn the merits and benefits of the collected *iasak*. Rank-and-file cossack Andrei Ivanov corroborated Pushchin's claims, and added that some of the remaining cossacks died of starvation and the Chinese killed others.[581]

There were already sufficient reasons to doubt Pushchin's claims. During the rebellion of Tomsk in 1648/1649, cossacks under the lead of Pushchin and the second voevoda backed a sovereign's affair against the first voevoda. While most cossacks were never punished for this and subsequent acts of insubordination, Pushchin, a forceful advocate of the rebels' cause and leader of their delegation to Moscow, was among the thirty-one punished by the knout – few indeed for one of the longest town rebellions in Russian history. The tsar then banned him to Iakutsk along with eleven of his comrades.[582] During the rebellion, the protagonists faced multiple counteraccusations of sovereign's affairs by their mutual foes. The considerable experience Pushchin amassed in this rebellion can be gauged from the fact that the whole period from April 1648 to August 1649 was spent in attempts to break the information embargo the rebels had imposed on their captives, the partisans of Tomsk voevoda Osip Shcherbatyi.[583]

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[581] Ogloblin, "Iakutskii rozysk", 383
[582] Aleksandrov, *Vlast'*, 288
[583] Pokrovskii, *Tomsk*, 229, 322-3

With regard to transforming the sovereign's affair, Siberia profited from its frontier status. Even in the European north of Russia, where on top of the traditional organs of self-administration a voevoda administration had been superimposed in the early seventeenth century, voevodas ruled with the help of outside troops. Taxes were collected by these troops in the vicinity of the north-western border, and at times even the local levy of service men was assembled in this manner.[584] Coercion used to convene the *sluzhilye liudi* in Moscow was codified in the 1631/1632 statute to Beloozero, threatening to send guards from Moscow in case of objections and to make the local *dvoriane* of the Moscow list pay for the persecution twice over.[585] In the more central rural areas of Muscovy, it is true, the lack of even the most basic staff reduced the voevoda to little more than one of the local dignitaries, whose connections at court and in the chancelleries as well as local support were indicative of their local standing.[586] In Siberia, however, patronage followed rather different channels. Moscow was indeed far away, as word would have it, and it received the news long after it was current: three months later and more.[587] When a cossack *Personenverband* returned from "distant service" to its base in a Siberian town the voevoda usually had changed at least once, for his tenure was only two to four years. Returning cossacks could not expect the voevoda's collaboration, yet expecting the opposite was even more unreasonable. As already mentioned, any cossack *Personenverband* returning from campaign could anticipate a pardon for anything they had done whatsoever, if only they brought sufficient fur tribute.

In this institutional context and considering that territories in a newly conquered and not yet entirely mapped land were hard to delineate, let alone defend, competition between different towns and forts over territories was intense. Whenever a clash occurred, one party claimed it had been assaulted when "accepting new *iasak*-payers under the sovereign's exalted hand", as did the Tomsk cossacks in 1639. Their opponents, Eniseisk cossacks in the new fort of Iakutsk, returned the allegation, claiming it was indeed their established *iasak*-people living close by the

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[584] Bogoslovskii, *Samoupravlenie*, vol.2, 287-90
[585] Iakovlev, *Namestnich'i*, 188
[586] Kivelson, *Autocracy*, 266-9
[587] Even important news like the rebellion in Tomsk 1648 travelled four to six months: Pokrovskii, *Tomsk*, 24

fort who had been attacked by Tomsk cossacks, based at their own fort, and their non-*iasak* paying native allies[588], an allegation tantamount to a sovereign's affair.[589] Even in the 1690s, when most potential *iasak*-payers had been divided among the towns and forts, usurpations still occurred. In 1697 Selenginsk *prikazchik* Ivan Korytov, on the river Selenga east of lake Baikal gave a good example of vicious local politicking with government decrees and petitions. He complained that the *prikazchik* of the small fort of Kabansk, the *desiatnik* Emelian Panikadilshchik, one of the leaders of the Transbaikalian rebels in 1696, had made inroads into the "Selenginsk great sovereign's *iasak* Buryats". In that year, Korytov had refused to follow the rebels, for which he was punished.[590] Panikadilshchikov claimed that instructions given to him in Irkutsk subordinated the said *iasak* Buryats to Kabansk. In his own favour, Korytov cited a petition by "Selenginsk *deti boiarskie* and *piatidesiatniki* and *sluzhilye liudi* of all ranks" sent to Irkutsk "before my arrival". The petition asserted that Selenginsk Buryats were ordered to deliver the *iasak* to Selenginsk when they were first subjected to "the sovereign's elevated hand". In Siberia, no force could be sent in to bring recalcitrant local cossacks to order, since that meant increasing the number of contenders for the fur tribute and of mouths to be fed with imported grain. Likewise, no patron at court was powerful enough to stop a successful cossack group that had managed to bypass its competitors in the Siberian forests.

In such cases, the sovereign's affair remained almost the only way to contest the spoils and spheres of influence. This was a reality Iakutsk cossack Samson Artem'ev and his comrades had to accept in 1657, after they lost their interpreter in an accident at the portage between the rivers Vatan and Nantara. As they were left without anyone who could gather information from the natives, give orders or collect the *iasak*, they soon lost their best *amanat* as well. This *amanat* lost no time, calling on the *iasak*-paying Tungus Khudynets to destroy the equipment of Artem'ev's men stored in a hiding place. Artem'ev sent to cossack Kondrat'ei Moiseev in the middle winter-hut on Nantar river "on behalf of this sovereign's affair", but Moiseev

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[588] *DAI* vol.2 (1846), no.82, pp. 231-4; Lantzeff, *Siberia*, 84
[589] *DAI* vol.4 no.37, pp. 91-2
[590] RGADA f.1121 op.2 no.176 l.4-5 (report)

preferred to shelter Khudynets during winter until the *iasak* was paid. In his report, the furious Artem'ev, unable to present any furs at Iakutsk, accused his rival Moiseev of leaving the sovereign's service by not taking appropriate care.[591] Artem'ev did not rely on the loss in profit engendered by the hidden *amanat*, since he knew his opponent had collected a huge amount of tribute. His strategy is still reminiscent of the ritual aspects of the sovereign's affair. Though stressing financial matters, he nevertheless tried to create the impression that Moiseev was a traitor.

Rustemeyer, who has provided a number of interesting cases of the sovereign's word and affair taking place in European Muscovy, has argued that Muscovites used the pretenders as well as the sovereign's word and affair in an instrumental way she describes as modern political behaviour.[592] To understand early modern developments, historians need to be careful with the assumption of irreversible modernisation processes from archaic compact ritual to rationally differentiated codified law. On a closer look, communicative forms indulged in a "long" medieval age as well as entered into a "premature" modern era, which both overlapped everywhere in early-modern Europe to differing degrees and at different times. Already in the Carolingian era, processes of codification served to institutionalise basic forms by elaborating on canonic texts. On the other hand, even in much later centuries ritual codes of communication used for regulation turned out sweeping successes, while seemingly rational codified law stood on a shaky basis, because it lacked the organisational basis as well as complementary mentalities. In this sense, there was indeed a field of tension, but it ran rather diagonally between the two poles of uncombinable ritual and codified law, across the whole cultural system as an offer, opening up a functionally differentiated alternative. This is obvious in particular where political tenets are pragmatically pursued, while rituals and law were elaborated, for example the order of the Golden Fleece, where rituals were rationally instrumentalised, as during summits and royal entries, or where in codified, but precarious arrangements speech was used as a ritualised medium of communication.[593] In this sense, ritual arrangements such as the sovereign's word,

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[591] *DAI* vol.4 no.37, pp. 91-2
[592] Rustemeyer, "Verrat", 272, 269-70
[593] Duchhardt, "Vorwort", in: idem, *Spannungsfeld*, VII

oral petitioning, invocation of the sovereign's word or affair, or the withholding of the contents of the sovereign's affair were not necessarily "traditional". They fitted well the conditions in Siberia, where the main problem was to overcome distance both economically and politically: building up a stable, hierarchically controllable infrastructure would have been too expensive. On the other hand, codified political privileges for some groups – such as privileges for elective courts of law, or a codification of separate cossack law beyond the institutionalisation that actually took place – would have meant reducing interaction to a degree that threatened to minimise coordination and stall trade. Thus, the two partly mutually exclusive requirements of economy and politics could undermine overly "rational" codification, while ritual arrangements in some places stabilised the empire.

Whether we are prepared to consider the sovereign's affair as modern or rather as traditional, it is reasonable to look at processes of institutionalisation or institutional change from a perspective that allows for their possible rationality. By establishing the *sinodik ermakovym kazakam*, for example, Kipriian founded an idealistic objectification, an explicitly-formulated reflexion that set up, justified and legitimated the institutional stock. Idealistic objectifications comprise (at least in general) the whole complex of an organisation's significance, its system of norms, form and purpose. Its methodical orientation can be prospective, setting a target ('programme', for example Dante, *De monarchia*), analytically ascertaining ('science', e.g. Aquinas *De regimine principum*), or, as in this case, retrospective ('historiography').[594] Overcoming the problem of publicising such objectifications in a still largely illiterate environment, Ermak and his cossacks' feats were read out regularly in Tobol'sk's St. Sophia cathedral. It left no doubt as to the preferences of the tsar concerning the relations with the cossacks:

> "Ermak sent the *iasak* to Moscow, sable, fox, polar fox and squirrel with an ataman and cossacks to the sovereign...Ivan (IV.) [reporting] that by his sovereign's fortune they conquered the *tsarstvo* of Sibir' and praise God for everything."

In this early formula the sovereign's affair does not yet appear as a term, however, the magic and God-bestowed qualities of the sovereign's support and the apparently staunch loyalty of the cossacks to the tsar are evident in many places in

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[594] Melville, "Institutionen", 14

the *sinodik*. This ritual display and the tribute delivered made them eligible for the sovereign's mercy:

> "When the cossacks arrived in Moscow, the sovereign…received them and ordered that the report was read. The sovereign bestowed cash and clothes on the cossacks, sent great reward and his merciful sovereign's word to Ermak and the cossacks."[595]

Even if the tsar did not approve of the earlier feats of a cossack group, as he did in Ermak's case, he would never fail to redeem and bestow his gifts on the successful.[596] The voevodas' instructions stipulated that cossacks returning with *iasak* from "new lands", which had not previously paid *iasak*, could rely on a handsome reward.[597] While in this case, written reports took centre stage, in the largely illiterate frontier environment of the fur tribute collectors, ritual aspects of the sovereign's affair remained important.

Town Rebellions and the Sovereign's Affair

While these examples highlight how the sovereign's affair structured conflicts in outlying areas during campaign service and collection of the *iasak*, where it proved a useful means to make the contenders acceptable back to service of the tsar, it was also applicable to urban power struggles. In these cases, it was more important to express differing points of view without questioning the authority of the tsar. If the voevoda demanded too much from the cossack community, even if he acted according to the tsar's interest as did voevoda Shcherbatyi of Tomsk in 1648 – economising on expensive cossack salaries – they quite often united to overthrow or disobey him. In a contradiction of sorts, however, they also formulated their claims as a sovereign's affair. Historians either have neglected this problem completely, or have seen in such cases a naïve belief in the "good tsar", which squarely contradicted the underlying forces of bureaucratisation and the increasing power of the voevoda and therefore could only be frustrated.[598] Moon and Field, studying nineteenth-century peasants, have raised the question of whether cossacks as well as peasants really believed in their own zeal for the sovereign's affair, or only feigned it, but

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[595] PSRL vol.36.1, 40, l.110; 123, l.14 ob.
[596] Perrie, "Outlawry", 534-9
[597] "Nakaz iakutskim voevodam" 1658, *DAI*, vol.4 (1851), no.46, 108
[598] Aleksandrov, *Vlast'*, 224-33

despite their inclination to explain the seeming contradiction in terms of the dissimulative, cunning and manipulative nature of peasant behaviour, Moon concludes that the evidence is contradictory and inconclusive.[599] Perrie has noted that in the last analysis such questions are perhaps unanswerable.[600] Sincerity, however, is only in question where coherence – of an ideology of monarchism, be it popular or otherwise – is obligatory. In this respect, institutions are much more adaptable. An institution is contested since it can be used as a resource of power by those who are physically, intellectually and socially capable of claiming it for their actions.[601] Institutional analysis identifies different leitideas competing for the legitimate interpretation of an institution. Every leitidea is only temporarily successful by being set apart from and above a complex of often-incompatible potential orientations. Since the leitidea is a product of struggle and a synthesis of contradicting issues, it disowns many of the competing senses and drafts of order. Yet this is the very reason why its validity is never uncontested and depends on different places, situations, interests and social groups.[602]

Contested and varying leitideas allowed for a limited degree of politics on the local level. On 12 April 1648, Grigorii Pleshcheev-Podrez, an outlawed noble and well-known troublemaker, while still in prison invoked a "sovereign's affair" against the voevoda, Osip I. Shcherbatyi of Tomsk, which was then made public with the help of cossack plotters by mouth-to-mouth propaganda. Thereafter, well-oiled machinery staged a rebellion pre-planned by cossacks from all ranks during the days before. A huge crowd, – according to Shcherbatyi – no less than three hundred or one-third of Tomskans, assembled in front of the voevoda's office and demanded the conditional release of Pleshcheev to have him questioned on the details of his accusation. The voevoda, who already knew that his supporters among the cossacks had lost control of the population, tried to remind the cossacks of Pleshcheev's misdemeanours and keep him imprisoned, however finally yielded to the demands of the crowd. The rebels sent a delegation to fetch the prisoner. Thus the voevoda was

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[599] Moon, David, *Russian Peasants and Tsarist Legislation*, Houndmills 1972, 175-6, cited according to Perrie, "Popular", 163.
[600] Perrie, "Popular", 163
[601] Maset, *Macht*, 78, 82; Foucault "Macht", 257; Burkitt 1993, 56
[602] Rehberg, "Institutionenwandel", 103

confronted by Pleshcheev publicly, at which point Pleshcheev repeated the invocation. In a characteristic combination of these ritual elements with written, institutionalised forms of communication, the rebels asked whom he accused – a detail withheld until this moment – and the cossack Chechuev documented his answer.[603] Thus in this case, too, the invocation of the sovereign's affair focused the proceedings of a mass assembly. The result of this confrontation was the official "*otkaz*", the deposition of the voevoda by the cossacks, who declared they could no longer live under Shcherbatyi's jurisdiction and serve the sovereign faithfully.

While from the onset there was little doubt that Pleshcheev-Podrez's sovereign's affair was void, an information battle ensued about the proper interpretation of the events vis-à-vis Moscow. The voevoda, under arrest in his court, managed at times to by-pass the information blockade imposed by the rebels. In his version of events, he had been violated by the rebels, and the rebellion was subsumed under the heading of "riotous assembly and plot (*skop i zagovor*)", one of the special cases of the sovereign's affair.[604] The rebels, comprising most of the cossacks and inhabitants of the town, compiled long lists of transgressions they claimed the voevoda had perpetrated, and send them to Moscow, along with their own version of the events on 12th April, which were presented as a fully legal submission of a petition addressed to the sovereign. They claimed they had only acted in the best interest of the sovereign – reductions in salary and the retributions forced upon them by Shcherbatyi, they claimed, made them incapable of performing service, tantamount, in their view, to a sovereign's affair. These conflicting leitideas under the common institutional cover of the sovereign's affair were typical for Siberia, and they had lasting consequences – for over a year the rebels controlled the town; another three years were to pass before even a few of them were – comparatively lightly – punished.[605]

Even in the case of their *iasyr'*, Tomsk cossacks employed the leitidea that their service was at the heart of the sovereign's affairs. As mentioned above, cossacks believed they had a traditional right to own these captives, whose relatives then

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[603] Pokrovskii, *Tomsk,* 51
[604] Hellie, *Ulozhenie*, gl.II st.21
[605] Aleksandrov, *Vlast'*, 288; Pokrovskii, *Tomsk*, 351-68

bought them out. Although supplies to the cossacks were not necessarily against the interest of the tsar, any unnecessary harsh treatment of the *iasak* people violated the principle of protection (*obereganie*) – as captives, they could neither hunt fur-bearing animals nor pay the *iasak* with their herds. The rebels made sure they stroke the right tone, revealing that the cossacks' leitidea concerning the sovereign's affair opposed Shcherbatyi, who deprived Tomsk cossacks of this income:

> "In 1645/1646 we, your sovereign's *kholopi*, retaliated against your sovereign's traitors, the Kalmyks. With the aid of your sovereign's fortune we defeated them. Prince Osip took all our booty and captives…by force. He baptised our *iasyr'* to send them to Rus'."[606]

Instead of insisting on their traditional right, which they felt was contested by the tsar's and the voevoda's demands, they relied on another decree, banning the baptism of captured natives or their selling into slavery. They tried even harder to prove that the voevoda had violated the tsar's affairs by taking away their private *iasyr'* –they designated their captives as *amanat* (official captives who lived in the forts and towns according to steppe tradition to ensure their relatives paid the *iasak*).[607]

> "The foreigners, seeing that their wives and children were in Tomsk and not dispersed [throughout the empire], visited them and obeyed the tsar."[608]

When the voevoda took the captives away, the argument runs in the cossack petition, the Kalmyks withdrew from Tomsk, and instead of trading began hostilities. The virtue in this is clearly not naivety, but purposefully somewhat twisted logic, as even Pokrovskii, calling the cossacks' perceived needs somewhat overstated their "interests", has to admit in this detail, but not in the general picture. This approach served to confuse and occupy the chancellery – in the service of the sovereign the cossacks mixed their *iasyr'* with the *amanat* as though it was one and the same. Siberian cossacks, in short, had developed a very peculiar attitude towards Moscow – instead of raiding the tsar's treasury on the highway, they hijacked it symbolically using competing norms and decrees – the instructions unequivocally barred slave-trade with *iasyr'* to stabilise the fur tax – to put together a suitable leitidea interpreting the sovereign's affair in line with their perceived needs. Since their

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[606] Pokrovskii, *Tomsk*, 98
[607] Khodarkovsky, *Steppe*, 56-60
[608] Pokrovskii, *Tomsk*, 99

elected voevoda was formally second voevoda, they maintained that they were heeding the sovereign's affair even after refusing to obey Shcherbatyi.

On 30th July 1648, after a series of contradictory petitions from the Tomsk rebels had been sent and reports written by the voevoda and his imprisoned supporters had slipped through the lines of the information embargo around the voevoda's court, the prison and on the roads and rivers connecting Tomsk to the outside world, the regular new secretary arrived in Tomsk to relieve his – by then deceased – predecessor.[609] A fierce battle ensued, with both sides seeking to win over secretary Kliucharev, who had left Moscow before any of the above documents could reach it. Since Kliucharev from the outset supported prince Osip, who had briefed him in advance, the rebels tried to entice him to change. Their main argument was the sovereign's affair, Shcherbatyi's transgressions and the "destruction and oppression" suffered by the population of Tomsk. Since the first days of the rebellion, when the first voevoda, only just deposed, had entered the voevoda's office and seized the official seal, the second, elected voevoda Bunakov and secretary Patrikeev, not without instigation from the rebels, set up office in town, on a cossack's homestead, to avoid implication by the deposed voevoda's affairs. Il'ia Bunakov then tried to persuade Kliucharev to join him in the new *s''ezzhaia izba*, instead of trying to convene both voevodas in the old, "raided" office, which was in the eyes of the rebels not secure from Shcherbatyi's unlawful afflictions. Thus, although they could hardly miss on the difficulty of reconciling this decision with the spirit of their petitions – Bunakov had a hard time in explaining why he held office in the "traitorous home-stead" during interrogation – , they did demonstrate a keen awareness of the relevance of controlling secret access to a public space. Bunakov explained that

> "according to their petition these days Il'ia alone sits at your sovereign's affairs. With prince Osip he cannot sit by any means."[610]

That very hour, Kliucharev reported, a delegation "of about sixty people" arrived and supported Bunakov's view, adding "with great noise" that they would not allow anyone to become messenger or bailiff, thus preventing Kliucharev and Shcherbatyi

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[609] Although there are other accounts of the Tomsk rebellion, only Pokrovskii presents the sources of the Kliucharev debate.

[610] Pokrovskii, *Tomsk*, 249

from enacting a decree or court decision. Thereby they betrayed a very keen sense for the limits of hierarchic implementation of monologic law, which Pokrovskii overlooks in his account. He equally overlooks that they, again, made their appearance in the public sphere limited to service issues in front of the voevoda's office, where they made adept use of the opportunities it offered. That same evening another rebel delegation asked for the tsar's decree, which Kliucharev had already given to Shcherbatyi; he also accepted a petition by one of the first voevoda's supporters accusing Bunakov of a sovereign's affair. On 1st August, another, bigger delegation with "many people of all ranks" approached Kliucharev, repeating the arguments and the threat to beat anyone who acted as messenger or guard. *Syn boiarskii* V. Ergol'skii also hinted to the underlying assumptions of this step – once the first voevoda and secretary could not enact their court decisions, their popularity would be minimal,

> "and therefore there will be many killings among the cossacks and there will be great confusion (*smuta*) in Tomsk."[611]

The secretary understood very well that this reference to the Time of Troubles pointed at the very heart of the sovereign's affair, and that he was in the middle of a struggle for the leitidea interpreting the institution. In his public speech, he lumped together several events, to show that attempts from below to restore security never helped:

> "So it happened when Moscow was destroyed, when the Lithuanians and Poles conquered Muscovy and there was no sovereign at that time in Muscovy. Their brethren the cossacks were at Moscow with the boyar, voevoda and prince Dmitrii Trubetskoi and with prince D.M. Pozharskii, and that is what...[they] did: They killed each other traitorously."[612]

From secretary Kliucharev's point of view, not even the second militia had any influence on the history of Muscovy, let alone the liberation of Moscow. His ideas about the sovereign's affair, far removed from the realities of the Siberian frontier, represented a radical solution to relations between Moscow and the cossacks. In Muscovy west of the Urals, however, in this guise or in the other, portraying the

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[611] Ibid., 251
[612] Ibid.

peasant *muzhik* as the culprit, it would have been a mainstream leitidea, on which even peasants often agreed.[613] Nevertheless, Kliucharev expounded one of the leitideas competing for influence in Tomsk, striving to disown divergent orientations to set apart one vision of pacification:

> "Yet when God cleansed Muscovy and...there was a tsar again in Muscovy, [as]...your father Mikhail Fedorovich...[was crowned], these traitorous cossack customs were indicted."[614]

That was a bit much for Tomsk cossacks a generation after the Troubles, especially since the rebels themselves had referred to the *smuta* in their first petition in April 1648 accusing the voevoda of causing troubles in town.[615] Although there might be some bias in Kliucharev's report of the rebels' prickly answer, it is nevertheless entirely in accord with their further stance:

> "They told me, your *kholop*: You are free (*volen*) in this, sovereign tsar and grand prince Aleksei Mikhailovich of all Russia, but you will never order that all of them be hanged. Prince Osip will not lead them."[616]

Whether Kliucharev reported the exact wording, or accentuated his belief in the only true leitidea about the sovereign's affair, with the intention of marking Tomsk cossacks as openly rebelling against the tsar, cannot be established with certainty from his account alone. Yet it is quite clear that the rebels did not nourish naïve hopes as Pokrovskii assumes, or a "monarchist illusion", when they carried on petitioning the "true" tsar. They knew very well the fundamental body that supported their stance: It was not the *mir* they cited, but "all of us". The solidarity of the *Personenverband* resounded in these words; a self-reliant conviction that even the tsar was, in the last analysis, no stronger than any Siberian cossack in a *Personenverband* pursuing its aim – in other words, even Moscow had to take into account the solidarity of the *Personenverband*. The strong, centralising, active and penetrating state Pokrovskii and Aleksandrov depict, and to which the "estates" of the cossacks supposedly succumbed under Peter I.,[617] could not gain a foothold in Siberia. Prince Osip Shcherbatyi nurtured other, perhaps naïve, hopes, in his attempt

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[613] Lukin, *Predstavleniia*, 71-3
[614] Pokrovskii, *Tomsk*, 252
[615] Ibid., 26
[616] Ibid., 252
[617] Aleksandrov, *Vlast'*, 355-7

to terrify Tomskans with torture and the gallows, which, despite his best efforts, he could only realise in a different time and in a less autonomous place: He helped to hang scores of rebels in the Middle Volga region during the Razin rebellion. In Siberia, nothing quite comparable ever happened, despite numerous rebellions.[618]

Tomskans, however much they referred to the "*istinnyi tsar*", never forgot the very real struggle of leitideas: The last Tomsk delegation repeated these words in a Moscow jail in October 1649, when petitioners for the last time tried to explain their position to the tsar.[619] Nevertheless, Kliucharev's speech made a lasting impression: Some of the *deti boiarskie* and wealthy cossacks decided to switch sides at this point, and, though they were punished by their former allies, became supporters of Shcherbatyi. For the time being, the rebels did their best to preclude any contact and collaboration between the first voevoda and the secretary, who were arrested in their courts.

The rebels had no illusions about their situation, as their further course of actions showed. On 8th August 1649, sixteen months after Shcherbatyi was arrested, new voevodas arrived from Moscow. For the rebels, this was a clear victory. Bogdan Andreevich Kokovinskii was the brother-in-law of Il'ia Bunakov's brother Andrei and brought Il'ia's spirits and supplies; Mikhail Petrovich Volynskii was an old foe of Shcherbatyi, who had alienated some of Shcherbatyi's slaves on an earlier occasion.[620] This did not happen by chance – patronage was one of the strongest forces in Muscovy, and Bunakov used it as anybody else did. Pokrovskii cites these connections in the main body of his book, but offers no concept for proper analysis, and there is no mentioning of these forces in the conclusion at all. Furthermore, he tends to downplay patronage links of the *Personenverband*, while patronage networks that aided the voevoda or his partisans are presented as proof of bureaucratisation and centralisation implemented successfully from above. Bunakov was a protégé of the boyars Grigorii and Stepan Gavrilovich Pushkin and appealed to

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[618] Ibid., passim. The exact number is hard to establish due to the nature of the subject, the sources and the secondary literature; suffice it to mention that hardly any of the Siberian towns was touched less than a few times, let alone spared. Rebellions to some degree cluster around dates of general crisis, but were by no means restricted to these periods: cf. the dates mentioned for Tomsk in the Introduction, 14.

[619] Pokrovskii, *Tomsk*, 326

[620] Ibid., 319

prince M.I. Viazemskii, the brother-in-law of former Tomsk secretary Boris Patrikeev, to save him "from the ground of hell" which his colleague Shcherbatyi prepared for him, as he claimed.[621] Shcherbatyi and his protector prince Trubetskoi, who headed the Siberian chancellery had little influence on who was to become voevoda.[622] Still, the rebels as well as Bunakov had to struggle for their rights and view of events, in Tomsk as well as in Moscow, signifying altogether different contexts for respective leitideas.

Opposed leitideas are also to be seen during the relief of the old voevodas and the settling of financial accounts. Unsurprisingly, Shcherbatyi reported that from the outset the relieving voevodas did not agree unconditionally with his interpretation that the cossack rule in town was "traitorous". The new voevodas' stance was aided by two opposed orders – one being the instruction issued to the new voevodas, which, according to normal procedures, stipulated that the old colleagues should both account for the town. Shcherbatyi presented another decree: It was pronounced in Moscow on 4th March 1649, already taking into account the new conditions in Tomsk and therefore spared the first voevoda from the procedure of transfer. Despite angry and extended quarrels with Shcherbatyi, Kokovinskii and Volynskii adhered to the instruction they had received. They invited the rebels' representatives to their courts and vice versa. Despite his attempts to resist, Shcherbatyi was powerless – the voevodas had had him posted "in a house without circumvallation on the meadows" and he feared retaliation by the cossacks; after ten days he gave in.[623]

In Tomsk, rebels could now rely on due process to press for their interests.[624] Already on 12th August, the rebels demanded the exclusion of secretary Kliucharev from the impending investigation, due to his partiality. Shcherbatyi's partisans, Petr Sabanskii and comrades, according to due process, had been sent to Tobol'sk during the investigation. The rebels did not feel insecure at all – none of their petitions was signed so carelessly as this one, by only twenty-three persons, including two *deti boiarskie*, among them the notorious Fedor Pushchin, four *piatidesiatniki*, ten *desiatniki* who also signed for their men, and seven rank-and-file cossacks. Once no

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[621] Ibid., 350; Chistiakova, "Tomskoe", 78
[622] See 141-2
[623] Pokrovskii, *Tomsk*, 318-21
[624] Weickhardt, "Due-Process"; Brown, "Neither", 4, 20

effort seemed necessary, these men formed the very core of the rebels. They had judged the situation correctly – Kokovinskii and Volynskii relieved Kliucharev from investigation without even waiting for orders, and wrote to Moscow they could not start the investigation, for the decree demanded Kliucharev's signatures under all documents to be sent to the chancellery. Kliucharev resigned and sent a petition in September, asking to be relieved from his duties. Trubetskoi was impelled to agree;[625] the bureaucracy was dealt one more blow.

The investigation now took an unwelcome turn for Shcherbatyi, but satisfied the majority of the garrison. As in many other cases after Siberian rebellions[626], the *odinachnaia zapis'*, the written decision not to hand over each other, as well as the general line prescribed by petitions signed by almost all cossacks and other inhabitants of the town made sure any investigator had a hard time. While Kokovinskii and Volynskii gave Shcherbatyi reason to complain about their irregular investigation methods, and did not find much evidence directed against the rebels, the seemingly softening stance of the Tomskans encouraged the Siberian chancellery to send in new investigators, who were to act independently of the voevodas, and who arrived in Tomsk on 20th March 1650. At the same time, Trubetskoi ordered Fedor Pushchin and ten more "advisors" of Il'ia Bunakov to Moscow to be confronted face to face with Osip Shcherbatyi. Shcherbatyi had also used his position as first voevoda to request several petitioners on behalf of the rebellion to be arrested en route back to Tomsk at Tobol'sk and other towns – although the tsar had received them – measures that were sanctioned afterwards by Trubetskoi.[627] The road and the towns marking the stations, were dangerous places for rebels, since the local *Personenverband* in their town of origin could not always help them against their foes, with their far-flung networks of clients and patrons. However, they did not cease to send delegations to Moscow, with solemn affirmations that they heeded the sovereign's affair. When the direction of the investigation turned against them, with the second successors of Shcherbatyi and Bunakov in office in Tomsk, they still kept to this line. In Tomsk, investigators had a hard time to find anyone not involved in

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[625] Pokrovskii, *Tomsk*, 328-9
[626] Aleksandrov, *Vlast'*, 251, 276; Torke, *Staatsbedingte*, 87-9
[627] Pokrovskii, *Tomsk*, 335-6

the rebellion, since until March 1652 Tomskans maintained they had given their statements to Kokovinskii and Volynskii and did not wish to contradict them. Again, the rebels stood their day by regulating what could be said in a particular form of partitioned public by means of referring to norms and leitideas related to the sovereign's affair. It was by no means evident that these norms could only be interpreted in the way that pleased the *Personenverband*. However, by highlighting the appropriate norms according to its needs, the *Personenverband* for a long time set the agenda. Power, after all, exists in action – it depends on the resources an agent by his knowledge and position in society is capable to mobilise in a given situation.[628] The institution of the sovereign's affair served to structure, focus and empower public resistance to a course of investigation that might destabilise the *Personenverband*'s position when it was, as any public communication, endangered by the tendency of participants in public not to listen to each other, especially in a situation of hightened tension and impending danger of defeat. This is an aspect of the sovereign's affair Aleksandrov and Pokrovskii overlook due to their concept of "*obratnye sviazy*"; they are more interested in the reactions of some *deti boiarskie* to the Kliucharev speech to prove that the upper crust finally left the "radicals to their own devices". Only when the investigators illegally questioned priests who were declared partisans of prince Osip, the balance of power changed. With the facts this yielded, and with the statements of some *deti boiarskie* who had remained neutral, a more detailed picture of the rebellion emerged. Moscow proceeded to draw conclusions and considered punishing the rebels.

With earlier delegations already under arrest, the third group of petitioners still arrived in Moscow. Nevertheless, the detained kept maintaining that their actions were undertaken on behalf of the "*gradtskie chelobitnye*", the garrison's petitions rather than the town's, as Aleksandrov, Pokrovskii and even Ingerflom believe. According to the detained, these proved that prince Shcherbatyi had contravened the sovereign's interest. Their seemingly desperate, "illusionary" but steadfast stance was rewarded. In the summer of 1652, the chancellery sent an instruction to Tomsk detailing punishment for those among Bunakov's advisors whom the chancellery and

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[628] Maset, *Macht*, 78, 82

the tsar considered the worst offenders. Out of the good two-thirds of the garrison, who had signed the rebels' petitions, these were seven delegates arrested in Moscow, seven rebels sent to Surgut and Tobol'sk during investigation, and eleven who stayed in town. They were to be beaten with the knout, which signified a painful but comparably light chastisement[629] – Ustiug in 1648 or the aborted Tomsk plot planned by a small minority in 1634, which never started but yielded twelve executions by hanging, demonstrated that the laws prohibiting "rebellion and plotting" were still taken seriously.[630] Although Shcherbatyi was determined to prove that quite a number of Tomsk rebels had been guilty of treason even before 1648 – the gallows were of no use during and even after a rebellion had engulfed the trading frontier.

All the while, for two years the partisans of the voevoda, *syn boiarskii* Petr Sabanskii with his twenty-one comrades had stayed in Moscow, to further their aims. Although they were never arrested, they complained about the *volokita*, the endless procedures in the chancellery, and about the detrimental effect that the continuing power of "cossack circles" in Tomsk had had on their possessions and their servants who no longer dared to show themselves in the streets. In this respect, as in many others, Tomsk conditions were a mirror-image of the Siberian chancellery, proving to the inconclusiveness of interpretations, or leitideas, of the sovereign's affair, rather than to the capability of the tsar or the chancellery to define an outcome that was obligatory to all participants, as Pokrovskii maintains – both quarrelling sides had to pay during investigation. Trying to create at least the impression of a victory, the chancellery claimed in its instruction, that:

> "...the cossacks were beaten for having plotted with Il'ia [Bunakov], for not being willing to accept...Shcherbatyi's jurisdiction, deposing him, locking him into his court, ...and barring communication... They beat and robbed their brethren, the Tomsk *deti boiarskie* Petr Sabanskii and comrades and put them in prison without the decree of the sovereign...and they elected Il'ia as their only [voevoda] and acted treasonously with him, holding cossack circles and rebelling."[631]

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[629] Ibid., 351-68
[630] Ibid., 368
[631] Ibid., 365

This however did not amount to an immovable "*pravda gosudarevoi*" as opposed to the "*mirskaia pravda*" to which, as Pokrovskii claims, the rebels adhered[632] – it was Trubetskoi's and Shcherbatyi's interpretation of the events, and it may be assumed that tsar Aleksei shared this leitidea. Diapproving of a common leitidea of the nobles and the tsar, even some of the former saw the affair in a different light, though not necessarily in the same way that the Tomsk cossacks did, while all, perhaps except for Shcherbatyi, knew very well that they had no leverage to impose it on Tomsk. During the early stages of the Moscow rebellion in 1648, when the monarchy seemed endangered, Aleksei even went as far as to receive the Tomsk rebels' delegates and assure them of his benevolence and help. Even when the petitioners were held on remand in Moscow prison, after handing a petition personally to the tsar on 20 October 1649 during the public procession on Dmitriev day, they never forgot about the difference between the institutional mechanism and the leitidea they propagated. In their letter directed to Tomsk cossacks they put it thus:

> "You, brothers, our masters, shall stand all as one, so that you will not be tried. And do not hand us in, brothers atamans *molodtsy*! We stand in for the truth for all the town; even if the sovereign orders to hang us, we will die in the truth waiting for the sovereign's grace.
>
> Therefore we beat our foreheads many times to you, our masters: live in Christ!"[633]

As a necessary precondition for their actions, they stressed again, they depended on the power the *Personenverband* provided by not admitting anything to investigation that could be used against them. Yet even in this unobserved moment, they did not imagine themselves as bearers of an ideology, of a truth that existed beyond the ramifications of the institutional mechanism, of the sovereign's justice. It was not "the town's justice" perceived as separate, as Pokrovskii claims,[634] but "the" one and indivisible justice that they felt they were upholding, bravely and honourably, for their whole town.[635] Although they understood that they ran the risk of ending up on the gallows, they also knew that their main opportunity lay in the

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[632] Ibid., 365, 371
[633] Ibid., 325-6
[634] Ibid., 325, 372
[635] According to C. Ingerflom, in this letter "the tsar is dead":"Entre le Mythe et la Parole: l'action", *Annales* vol.51.4 (1996), 733-57, here: 751-4.

attempt to influence the balance of power, which, however little inclined to their side, nevertheless would determine the outcome of the law suit. Therefore their unceasing attempts to maintain their position that all their actions aimed consistently to increase the profit of the sovereign and their hope for the sovereign's mercy were rational. They did not vie – or at least not mainly – for miraculous intercession, and were clearly reflected in the outcome. None of them was put to death, although Shcherbatyi by the same institutional mechanism of the sovereign's affair threatened to hang all of them. Even the leading rebels did not fare too badly. All the rebels returned to Tomsk, though some of them subsequently were outlawed to Iakutsk. Altogether sixty-five people, the banned rebels and their families, including Fedor Pushchin, were sent to Iakutsk, where they served in their former ranks. On their way to Iakutsk, the banned had ample opportunity to discuss leitideas, or the justice they were ready to die for irrespective of the tsar's decree, as *syn boiarskii* Petr Lavrov, one of Shcherbatyi's partisans, was checked by rebel *piatidesiatnik* Matvei Nenashev, who were both ordered to accompany the group. They also had good reason to do so – after all rebellion as well as punishment had proven that Moscow's most extreme measures and ambitious projects were not applicable to Siberia.

Thus the sovereign's word and affair offered a means of structuring, ritualising, and focusing debates in partitioned and public spheres that were thematically limited to issues of service. In the frontier, it provided a means of rallying cossacks that helped to integrate the empire. The sovereign's affair also provided a channel of appeal to higher-order authorities and allowed different members of a network of patronage to communicate on controversial issues without running the danger of being apprehended as traitours. As a set of related norms, expectations and related patterns of behaviour, it provided resources of power actors could make use of in the pitched semi-public battles for information and control that were characteristic of seventeenth-century Siberia.[636]

[636] For further examples of the invocation of the sovereign's affair against voevodas in Siberia, see Aleksandrov, *Vlast'*, 171-329, Bakhrushin, *Krasnoiarsk*, 175; Pokrovskii, "'Slovu'", passim.

The Sovereign's Profit and the Sovereign's Affair

To open a channel for appeal, and to be able to engage in negotiations, petitioners had to travel to Moscow, or at least to a more elevated voevoda or the bishop of Tobol'sk.[637] Siberian voevodas, however, enjoyed the right to ban journeys they deemed unnecessary, or else in case of emergency. This was in the interest of the tsar's treasure, since it prevented excess trade of furs by cossacks. Yet it should be mentioned that to a Russian of the seventeenth century, the notion "*gosudarevo kazna*" also meant a form of security. For this attitude the southern frontier must be held responsible. While Muscovy west of the Urals from the 1630s became increasingly capable of defending its southern borders against all-encompassing nomad invasions, fencing off small raiding groups was far more difficult. For such small groups, the fortifications of the border (the *zaseki*) were hardly impregnable. They came intending to capture a few hostages whom they could either sell as slaves or liberate for ransom. Muscovite steppe politics had different ways of dealing with this issue – while attempts to dominate the steppe nomads never lasted long, much was done by paying tribute to the Crimean khan and other nomad suzerains. Yet whenever Moscow failed to live up to expectations, nomad groups who lived on this tribute – as part of the traditional steppe politics – felt that they were not bound by earlier agreements.[638] Their solution to their economic slow-down was raiding, and they often did so irrespective of the khan – in nomad societies, elected khans were not nearly as authoritative as a European monarch. Ransom and tribute therefore amounted to an enormous financial burden for Muscovy. Thus the tsar had powerful and convincing arguments for his dominant role in spending at least five million roubles in the first half of the seventeenth century on ransom for captives to the Crimean khan alone. These were not trifles, as estimations of the number of new towns never built on account of the spending of state means on ransom payments – 1,200 in the first half of the seventeenth century – clarify.[639] Siberian cossacks were eligible to compensation for captivity,[640] although the *polonianichnyia deng'i* were

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[637] Bakhrushin "Krasnoiarsk" 156-61, 175-6
[638] Kappeler, *Vielvölkerreich*, 28
[639] Khodarkovsky, *Steppe*, 223
[640] Cf. chapter II. RGADA f.1121 op.1 no.422 ll.80, 88, 112-114 (petitions)

not levied in Siberia. In comparison with other European states, Muscovy was in a far worse situation: in the Mediterranean, according to some estimates, captives amounted to no more than a few thousands overall,[641] as opposed to an estimated one hundred and fifty thousand in Muscovy in the first half of the seventeenth century, or ten thousand in Western Siberia during the first two decades of the eighteenth century alone.[642] The *polonianichnyia deng'i* was the second most important tax after those levied for military spending, it was the most quickly growing tax in the seventeenth century, the first to be levied by homesteads, and it contributed to the growth of the state sector in ways unknown to Western Europe, where ransom continued to be handled by private interlocutors and monastic orders.[643]

Even ordinary people were well aware of this, as is shown by the case of the wife of a Ukrainian (*cherkashenin*) serving in Korochi. She was denounced for condemning the tsar who did not ransom her son, a prisoner in the Crimea: "...as I do not see my son before me, so the tsar shall not see daylight."[644] To no little degree, this explains why piety was one of the tsar's most valued attributes in popular and elite consciousness, and in loyal propaganda. The *gosudarevo delo*, inasmuch as it referred to financial affairs and the voevoda's prerogatives in allowing travelling, therefore had strikingly different overtones for those who ran the risk of capture – or at least for every Russian or Orthodox – that is, not of exploitation by an overwhelming state machinery, but of a legitimate claim to its revenues. Alienating funds on the part of the voevoda therefore was accused by the cossacks not only on private considerations, but also because they knew that these funds were not available for the "pious" ends of ransoming. This was especially significant as they expected that recovered funds from voevodas' belongings mostly ended in the state coffers rather than with those from whom they had been taken.[645]

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[641] Wolfgang Kaiser (Aix) in oral communcation during the Historikertag 2004, Kiel.
[642] Khodarkovsky, *Steppe*, 21-6, 205, 223; Akishin, *Politseiskoe*, 10
[643] Originally, it was collected by the patriarch: Alekseev, P.A., *Tserkovnyi slovar' ili istolkovanie slavenskikh ...rechenii*, (4th ed.) Hildesheim 1976, 5 pts., pt. 3, p. 257. On the mediterranean: Kaiser, Wolfgang, "Zwischen Loggia und Fondouk. Transkultureller Handel u Kommunikation zw Südeuropa u dem Maghreb i d Frühen Neuzeit", paper, Historikertag Kiel 2004, Sektion "Städtische Kommunikationsräume"
[644] Rustemeyer, "Verrat", 272
[645] Leont'eva, G.A., *Zemleprokhodets Erofei Pavlovich Khabarov*, Moscow 1991, 94

Another conspicuous influence of the southern frontier on Russia and, consequently, on Siberia, is a problem with the system of private financing obvious already in the history of Ermak's conquest of the Khanate of Sibir'. The tsar had first granted exploitation of Western Siberia and the right to set up their own fortified and armed garrisons and to judge their own people except for criminal lawsuits to the Stroganovs.[646] They were thus in theory in a similar position to Western European merchant corporations granted by their monarchs these rights which amounted to a state in the state. Yet in Russia, undercapitalisation meant that merchants could not fill this role. Undercapitalisation and low urbanisation were in no small degree caused by the significant drain on capital and people, caused by unceasing nomad raids, which in Siberia had still greater dimensions and lasted well into the eighteenth century – longer than west of the Urals.[647] As private merchants could not or would not organise cossacks during the conquest, or provide sufficient funds for any sustained presence, Ermak's cossacks preferred to deal with the tsar, despite Ivan IV's grant to the Stroganovs. While Ermak's cossacks did not prevail in the medium run, campaigns funded by the tsar finally set up a stable presence in Siberia.[648]

About the same time, Moscow faced the increasing desire of the emerging northern maritime powers to establish their power over Northern Russia and to find a new route to Siberian furs and to China.[649] To secure Siberia for Russia, Moscow was ready to place an enormous burden on the northern towns west of the Urals. In the 1630s, Ustiug paid the "Siberian supply": in 1632-36, it paid no less than 2,204 roubles 30 *altyn* every year in cash; transport to Tobol'sk was even more expensive.[650] Payments continued until 1685, when an edict decreed that Viatka was relieved of the obligation, since "there [was] enough grain in Siberia" by then.[651]

Thus, facing amorphous political pressures from the south and highly organised, technically superior influences in the north, in the formative period of Siberian cossack institutions at the end of the sixteenth and in the early seventeenth century

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[646] Müller, *Istoriia Sibiri* vol.I, 201, 206-7

[647] Altogether, the Crimea divulged tribute equalling the cost of the construction of 1.200 small *goroda* in the first half of the seventeenth century: Khodarkovsky, *Steppe*, 223. Floria, "Nemoevskii", 113

[648] Miller, *Istoriia*, vol.I, 266

[649] See chapter I.

[650] Bogoslovskii, *Samoupravlenie*, vol.II, 69, 76

[651] AI, vol.5, 1842, no.120, 199

after the Time of Troubles, Moscow was ready to provide flexible and palpable assistance. The cossacks were traditionally oriented towards Moscow's subsidies, but also lacked access to sufficient private funding and made a clear choice for the tsar. Henceforth, therefore, private spheres and trading was inextricably linked to the tsar's interests and vice versa. For the same reason, taxes as well as the tsar's attempts at monopolising trade with certain luxurious goods, most of them traded across the border or throughout the frontier may have enjoyed a higher measure of legitimacy than elsewhere, yet in Siberia the exact level was still subject to dispute. In particular, barring cossacks from travelling,[652] understood as legitimate zeal in the name of the sovereign's affair on the part of the voevoda, a task entrusted to him in his instruction, could be put forward as a legitimate leitidea capable of winning the acclaim of the cossacks under certain circumstances. However, the mixing of private and state spheres also meant that voevodas could exploit their position unduly. As explained in the next chapter, feeding practices meant that the voevoda was entitled to a limited amount of provisions that were to be laid down by mutual agreement. If the voevoda demanded too much from the cossack community, even if he acted according to the tsar's interest as did voevoda sShcherbatyi of Tomsk, Dvorianinov of Verkhotur'e, and others – economising on expensive cossacks' salaries – they united to overthrow or disobey him. Thus, in Siberia state and private spheres were blurred to a considerable degree. Privileged treatment of cossacks in travelling meant that state and private spheres were further intertwined.[653] At the same time, for cossacks these provisions facilitated travelling once the gatekeeper, the voevoda, had been won over or overcome.

Conclusion

The realities of the conditions under which Siberian cossacks served tended to increase the level of institutionalisation. The latest time for a relative break-through in literacy in an area as far east as Irkutsk was the 1690s, a time which also saw a marked increase in trade across the newly established border. Institutionalisation answered to the need for negotiation and information exchange. Yet, it was not so

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[652] Aleksandrov, *Vlast'*, 105-6, 172, 188
[653] See chapt.II

much the symbolic uses of a form of address and its interpretation, but the opportunities to exert control over these uses or to structure them that define a political system.[654] In Siberia, there was little chance of obtaining obedience directly – the power of the centre was largely virtual. Its material aspects depended on the motivation and means of overcoming distance and transport problems, which in turn could only be realised by trade. Thus, trade and finances, rather than military power, constituted the main means of ruling these vast territories.

Siberian cossacks of the seventeenth century provide an example of how Muscovite emphasis on the power of the group could be adapted to the needs of a dynamic community of merchants. While this meant that individual cossacks remained within the sway of group power, it did not indicate that these groups became particularly oppressive or petrified. With different, often opposed, groups in town, in a limited way cossacks could choose between different options, while they had to cooperate with one of the groups usually only for a limited period of time. As in confrontations in Italian city-states, adherents of the defeated group were often forced to leave the town. The sovereign's affair and the *Personenverband* did create peculiar social pressures to conform. Neutral bystanders could find it difficult to resist. Once a sovereign's affair was launched by a significant group, an obligation to sign came into existence: "Why do you refuse to sign the petition with us; are you not well disposed towards the sovereign?"[655] At the same time, decrees sanctioned a duty to denounce, in theory obligating everyone who knew about a sovereign's affair to make it known to the authorities.[656] Nevertheless, if the majority did not "haul with the mir" to support a sovereign's affair, and if the voevoda was not interested in it, it could be hard to inform Moscow. Early modern conditions were not conducive to the close control of local actors by the distant centre, and that was no less true in Siberia.[657] The sovereign's affair thus differentiated between those supporting action against the voevoda, and his supporters, *tertium non datur*. This was important for the rebels to make sure investigations, which had to rely on polls among the

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[654] Cf. Maset, *Macht*, 84
[655] Pokrovskii, *Tomsk*, 94. See chapter V.
[656] Kleimola, "Denounce", 759-79
[657] For comparison, see Beik, *Absolutism*; Kivelson, *Autocracy*; Landwehr, *Policey*

residents[658] did not find statements out of line with either the rebels or the equally tainted supporters of the voevoda. These precautions helped locally to establish a dominant leitidea.

On the other hand, cossacks could make sure they were not excluded from the *Personenverband* and its power, leaving the choice between different options to them. On 6th September 1680, Eniseisk cossack Karp Ermolin lodged a complaint with Ivan Perfil'ev, *syn boiarskii* and *prikazchik* in the *ostrog* Irkutsk. He protested against his comrade, Pronka Sirotinin who cursed the guards of the grain transport and claimed he "knows a sovereign's affair against all cossacks." The very same day, Eniseisk cossack Sirotinin was questioned. Perfil'ev inquired into the precise nature of the sovereign's affair and who was its perpetrator. Sirotinin however in part talked his way out claiming he was drunk. He asserted that on a service journey the year before one of his comrades, Trenko Tikhonov, had seized and sold three sacks of the sovereign's grain supplies at Udinsk *ostrog* on the other side of Lake Baikal. Sirotinin claimed he had reported this incident to the other cossacks, the hired cossacks and the trappers "who were sent with him". He added he had made a slip of tongue and apart from this incident, he knew no other sovereign's affair about anybody else.[659]

Unusual as this incident might seem in the light of existing Siberian accounts of the declaration of a sovereign's affair preoccupied with the impeachment of voevodas and other officials[660], it is revealing in many respects. The *Personenverband*'s complicity with Tikhonov had been stronger than any obligation to the tsar until Sirotinin accused all cossacks of a sovereign's affair. It was not uncommon to sell official supplies privately, but it was much less accepted not to share the proceeds with comrades. Sirotinin challenged the limitations of this *Personenverband* which no longer lived up to either of its promises – to serve the sovereign or to share the spoils – by uttering a mere five words. Thus, the sovereign's affair increased cossacks' options to ensure they received their share in

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[658] Described as an early form of the jury by Weickhardt, "Due-Process"; Pokrovskii, *Tomsk*, 259; Aleksandrov, *Vlast'*, 272-90

[659] RGADA f.1121 op.2 no.94 (investigation)

[660] Pokrovskii, "Slovu". Novombergskii collected proceedings against non-officials, mostly of lowly status.

trade as well as strengthened collective allegiances.[661] While peasants in Central Russia in the early twentieth century still used methods reminiscent of the *gosudarevo slovo i delo* to silence a minority of reform-minded local opponents[662], in the seventeenth century Siberian cossacks were already using this institution to make sure trade flows were not disrupted by authorities dominated either by noble patronage or by the *Personenverband.*

[661] See chapter V. Aleksandrov, *Vlast',* 154; Pokrovskii, "Slovu", 40
[662] Figes, Orlando, *A Peoples Tragedy*, New York 1996, 232-41, 361-2

Chapter IV Kormlenie and Bribery – Local Influence and Administration

In the last years of the seventeenth century, a huge scandal rocked Siberia; extensive investigations were conducted into the financial machinations and fraud surfacing in the east of the *tsarstvo*. The voevodas in particular were under scrutiny, yet among those who had transgressed the law, some survived investigations with impunity, in particular M.P. Gagarin and S.I. Durnovo of Krasnoiarsk. The head of the Siberian Chancellery since June 1695, A.A. Vinius, who regularly corresponded with Peter I, covered up for them, he kept in touch with them and was their "patron (*milostivets*)".[663] Neither Gagarin nor Durnovo were descendants of boyar families; but those were the days of favouritism early in Peter's reign, when the tsar was trying to establish a counterweight to traditional boyar power.[664] Yet Durnovo was opposed by Krasnoiarsk cossacks because he tried to cover up for his predecessor. He had little time to perpetrate any misdeeds himself but he had a hard time, since he was confronted by Krasnoiarsk cossacks, who became so alienated that they travelled forty versts to prohibit the official investigator, duma secretary Polianskii, from entering the town and *uezd*. In Moscow, Polianskii was accused of abetting the voevodas and was thus ousted as a side effect of the revolt.[665] This indicates that the investigation was indeed thorough, and could only be thwarted by a voevoda like Gagarin who, as a client of the tsar's favourite, Menshikov, was already high on the social ladder of patronage.[666] The question raised by these observations is how they can be reconciled with the obvious fact that bribery in Siberia was commonplace and widespread.

In 1701, shortly after these events, Vinius fell out of favour and tried to pay 10,000 roubles to Peter's friend and favourite Menshikov, to save at least the most cherished among his many posts giving him access to Siberian wealth. Menshikov

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[663] Akishin, Politseiskoe, 9 Zol'nikova, N.D., "Pis'ma iz lichnogo arkhiva sibirskogo voevody kontsa XVII v.", *Izvestiia SO AN SSSR. Istoriia*, vyp. 3 (Sept.-Dec. 1991), 8-14; Pavlenko, N.I., *Aleksandr Danilovich Menshikov*, Moscow 1981, 29; Bushkovitch, *Peter*, 183-5, 235 n.44

[664] Akishin, *Politseiskoe*, 186: in 1565, 18 members of the princely Gagarin kin fell out of Ivan IV's favour and were banned. Thereafter, the Gagarins occupied only voevoda positions in minor frontier towns.

[665] Bakhrushin, *Krasnoiarsk*, 191

[666] Bushkovitch, *Peter*, 272-3, 276-80

was new to the business and reported the affair to tsar Peter. As Pavlenko notes, had Vinius given "a more modest bribe", Menshikov might have accepted and helped him. Though Russia was hardly a positive exception among contemporary realms, it is interesting enough that the son of a Dutchman misjudged Menshikov so severely. The European overseas colonies at that time were by no means void of bribery, which at the local level interfered with central orders.[667] It is much more likely that Menshikov, despite his later habits, was indeed indignant at Vinius's behaviour, since the norms of his time did not exclude bribes in general, but excessive bribes. But is it feasible to assume that only Menshikov expressed the real norm of their time, while Vinius, as an embodiment perhaps of Russia's – and even more so – Siberia's deep and corrupt interior, behaved illegally?

To understand the issues of corruption, it is necessary to examine the chancellery system in some detail. With the growth of the chancelleries during the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the need to govern the conduct of administrators among themselves and between them and their clients also grew. This need generated administrative law, which encompasses standards establishing the performance and behaviour of administrators. It was institutionalised first in the 1550 *Sudebnik*, and the system was further developed in the judicial chancelleries charter and edict books (*ustavnye i ukaznye knigi*), non-codified Muscovite court case documents. It was also influenced by external sources, such as Byzantine and Lithuanian law.[668] The most comprehensive codification of Muscovite administrative law was the 1649 *Ulozhenie*, which also exposed an increasing consciousness of this need – it was a response to rebellions and, compared to the 1497 *Sudebnik*, the text of the code had increased tenfold. Administrative misconduct according to seventeenth-century Russian law could cover illicit material gain, theft of property or money, bribe-taking, the display of favouritism and nepotism towards colleagues or litigants, sheer inattentiveness, indifference or haughtiness towards subjects as well as untoward consumption and parading of wealth.[669]

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[667] Tracy (ed.), *Political Economy*
[668] Brown, "Neither", 5
[669] Ibid., 1-6

Yet Russians were disposed to view these not as fixed values, but as categories of degree that were condemnable only when such practices became too venal and corrosive of organisational efficiency. This was expressed in seventeenth-century terms denoting what today would be called corruption: *Likhoimstvo* meant the taking more than was allowed or expedient, and did not necessarily condemn the taking of bribes. It is received wisdom in Siberian studies that bribery was rife in this distant territory, with petty nobles paying bribes to be appointed to the post of voevoda[670] down to a whole "system of bribery" and corruption, which has been diagnosed by some researchers in passing, without supplying much evidence nor any definition.[671] Such superficial diagnoses were never followed up with an in-depth study of the conditions of bribery; scholars have also been reluctant to consider the question of whether modern terms are applicable to this period. Even in Muscovite studies in general, this question has been addressed only very recently. *Vziatka*, meaning literally "that which has been taken", had a multitude of meanings, such as recovering a debt or diverting *zhalovan'e*. One of Peter's well-known decrees regarding bribe-taking in 1714 used this word in a way close to modern usage. In 1698/1699 secretary of state Polianskii, who had been sent to Eniseisk to investigate irregularities and the rebellions of the preceding years, drew on the term to sum up a petition from members of the *gostinnaia sotnia*, handed in by two *prikazchiki*. Yet these early usages did not become current: A judicial dictionary of the late eighteenth century did not even bother to define the term *vziatka*. Instead, it referred the reader to *likhoimstvo*; though synonymous to *vziatka* for Russian readers by the nineteenth century, the latter term was derived from two roots, *lishnii* and *imat'*, the former denoting "superfluous, excessive, or unnecessary", while the latter is an archaic form meaning "to take".[672] Literally, thus, the term preferred by the eighteenth century did not refer to the transgression of the state's interest, as Peter according to his decrees would have it, or to the crossing of the fine line between the duty owed to the state and private interests, as the modern age sees the matter. Rather it was a reference to a

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[670] Chicherin, B.N., *Oblastnyia uchrezhdeniia Rossii v XVII-m veke*, The Hague 1968, 83, 85; Ogloblin, *Obozrenie* vol.III, 26-7, 31; vol.IV, 52; Lantzeff, *Siberia*, 48; *PSZ*, vol.II, 76, 143

[671] Leont'eva, *Sluzhilye*, 77

[672] Potter, Cathy, "Payment, Gift or Bribe?", in: Ledeneva, Alena (ed.), *Bribery and blat in Russia*, Basingstoke 2000, 21-34, here: 31; Langans, F., *Slovar' iuridicheskoi*, Moscow 1788.

limit defined either by custom or arbitrarily by the tsar. Thus this petition, as reported by Polianskii, did not make use of the term *vziatka* but placed great emphasis on the circumstance that Savelov had demanded an unusually large number of bribes and had in addition extracted them by force.

Savelov tried – successfully – to defend himself by pointing out that he never took "huge" bribes from the merchants "by force" (*vziatki napadkami ne vzial*) and did not inflict damages on the traders. Implicitly, he was maintaining that receiving a *vziatka* was not by itself a crime. To buttress his claims he produced statements made by two traders in June 1697, which explained that on their way back from China, Transbaikalian cossacks had forced the merchants to sign the petition incriminating Savelov.[673] There is little doubt that these statements were at least partially falsified. Contradictory statements by other members of the same caravan claiming that Savelov had demanded more than 660 roubles to let them pass had already been handed to Polianskii in Eniseisk in July 1697. However, in its conclusion, the Siberian chancellery found Savelov guilty of not demanding taxes, but not of taking bribes. To make sure his defence was received favourably, Savelov elaborately drew upon custom, reflecting the standards of its time.[674]

One of the most outspoken defenders of this viewpoint was the historian and voevoda of Astrakhan, V.N. Tatishchev, who was later administrator of the mines in the Urals. In his literary exhortations to his son on the virtues of a judge and a nobleman, he gave a lesson in how to make use of *mzda*, another term close to what in modern usage would be "bribe". Recounting his confrontations over this question, he gave a self-confident account of his purported answer to tsar Peter who had questioned his behaviour, giving a fair insight into the habits of a judge and voevoda. Tatishchev referred to biblical sources, "*Delaiushchemu mzda ne po blagodati, no po dolgu*" ("Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt." Romans 4:4), in replying to a charge by Nikita Demidov in 1722. Accordingly, he went even further when cornered by Peter: As long as the judge first looked at the affair, and decided by the letter of law, he did not transgress, while *likhoimstvo* would be illegal only if the judge decided wrongly and took money for it.

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[673] RGADA f.1121 op.1, no.429, ll.5-14 (investigation)
[674] Golovachev, P.M. (ed.), *Pervoe stoletie Irkutska*, St. Petersburg 1902, 116

Tatishchev's main argument is not a formal one; he claims to be much more concerned with political questions, such as the welfare of a merchant who might lose a substantial amount of money while he was waiting for a decision. A judge, Tatishchev knew, was paid to sit in court during the first half of the day, while the second half was not paid for. Therefore, if he was to refrain from playing cards, from hunting and society, he was to be remunerated for this extra effort. Since there were many cases that had to wait due to administrative overload and their position in the court's register, it was only fair to receive payment for renouncing his leisure time. According to Tatishchev, even such an ardent fighter against corruption as Peter, could not deny this necessity, though he specified that such leeway could only be granted to the honest judge. As Tatishchev argued, giving the term *vziatka* a proper interpretation:

> "Neither God nor your majesty can censure what is given as a quittance [of the debt] (*za mzdu vziatuiu*)."[675]

The *vziatka*, therefore, is literally "that what is owed to the judge." He implied that only excess demands supported by physical or other means of power were deemed illicit.

A comparison of Tatishchev's views with those of a rather more distinguished thinker is instructive when comparing Muscovy to Western Europe, where the great debate was not so much about *likhoimstvo*, but about venality. Montesquieu himself had bought office and claimed:

> „Cette vénalité est bonne dans les Etats monarchique parce qu'elle fait faire, comme un métier de famille, ce qu'on ne voudroit pas entreprendre pour la vertu; qu'elle destine chacun a son devoir, et rend les ordres de l'Etat plus permanents. Suidas dit tous bien qu'Anastase avait fait de l'empire une espèce d'aristocratie en vendant toutes les magistratures."

If offices were not sold publicly, in a monarchy they would be distributed and sold by courtiers under the counter:

> „Enfin, la manière de s'avancer par les richesses inspire et entretient l'industrie, chose dont cette espèce de gouvernement a grand besoin."

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[675] Tatishchev, V.N., *Izbrannye proizvedeniia*, Leningrad 1979, 143

In short, this was an ideology of absolutism „tempérée par la vénalité des offices", as Mousnier characterises conditions in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries.[676] In Western Europe, the princely state and the monarchies lived with similar administrative constraints, but they enjoyed the advantage of a much more developed trade capitalism. In both cases princely states found it difficult for their ambitions as well as their defensive needs to raise sufficient loans against securities, which they institutionally could not guarantee. With the exception of the Netherlands and England, the state was not yet able to guarantee a loan beyond the life-span of the monarch, and they also frequently resorted to force to make creditors more amenable. The tradition in canon law as well as in secular law of the *beneficium*, which was well-fortified against intrusion on the part of the state, however, allowed the employment of medieval structures in financial administration to raise loans against the security of perquisites.

In Muscovy, there was a significant lack of capital, to no small degree due to the financial drain of the open frontier, which has been estimated as equalling the construction of 1,200 small towns during the first half of the seventeenth century alone.[677] Since harvests ruined by bad weather and other causes of economic deterioration such as nomadic intrusions were more frequent in Muscovy than in the West or even in the more densely-inhabited parts of Poland, revenue from a particular province was less secure and stable.[678] To finance the income of a high noble, one province was not adequate – for an administrator, it paid much better to be sent to different provinces, and obtain revenue according to the leverage, patronage and other means of power provided, including personal capabilities.

The forms of service remuneration subsumed as alimentation (*kormlenie*) differ from *zhalovan'e* in that they were collected and paid locally, and not through the central chancelleries. Appointment to the post of a voevoda, on the other hand, was considered as *zhalovan'e*, too, in this traditional and basic sense meaning a boon, a

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[676] Mousnier, Roland, *La vénalité des offices*, 2. éd. Paris 1971, 623; Montesquieu, Charles, *De l'esprit des lois*, ed. G.Truc, Paris [n.d.], vol.I, 76; cited acc. to Reinhard, Wolfgang, "Staatsmacht als Kreditproblem", 218-31, here: 230-1

[677] Khodarkovsky, *Steppe*, 223-4

[678] Much of Muscovy's military success depended upon the efficient stockpiling of supplies: Frost, *Northern*, 53. Baberowski, Jörg, *Autokratie und Justiz*, Frankfurt/Main 1996, chapt.I.

favour.[679] In principle, there was the alimentation "on entering" and "on departing" from the district, the alimentation on holidays and the daily, weekly and monthly alimentation. The term *korm* was not reserved to voevodas, but could also apply to foreign dignitaries on the steppe frontier, who served the tsar or stayed for a short period. The rules governing alimentation (*kormlenie*) of the voevodas, their kin who accompanied them and the staff of the voevodas' office have often been blamed for the administrative inefficiencies and economic backwardness from which Russia suffered in the modern age.[680] However this is not evident by itself – it is obvious that any local collection of taxes was difficult to control in a huge empire with underdeveloped communications and inclement climatic conditions. To control them centrally was enormously expensive, while controlling them locally, by elected or hereditary organisations, reduced central control to naught, and rendered integration impossible. Therefore the voevoda was sent out with the unequivocal aim of enriching himself, the marginal returns of which he had to estimate himself – "*po tamoshnim delam*", as the instructions stated, according to local conditions. Yet he could also be called to account if, due to his activities, local taxes dropped, which resulted – albeit infrequently – in confiscations. Since Siberian returns were far more important to the central treasury owing to their immediate value in foreign exchange, Siberian voevodas were controlled more closely than was the case elsewhere. The special customs border established at Verkhotur'e was never beyond the influence of certain clienteles, but it was instructed to check and compare voevodas' wares and cash on entering and leaving Siberia, to find out about their illegal trading activities. It also constituted an impediment voevodas had to obviate by employing cossacks to appoint their excess wares to cossacks' tax-free allowances.[681]

At the changeover point between voevodas, *kormlenie* could accompany satisfactory or unsatisfactory contact between an administrator and judge and the population – but in a country which was so vast and little developed, which lived under such a strain of bad weather conditions and insecurity as Muscovy, this was better than no contact at all. Rulers had to content themselves with much smaller

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[679] Enin, G.P. *Voevodskoe kormlenie v Rossii v XVII veke*, St. Petersburg 2000, 315
[680] Torke, H.-J., "Statthalter", in: idem (ed.), *LGR*, München 1985
[681] Lantzeff, *Siberia*, 55; Ogloblin, *Obozrenie* pt. II, 58-64

steps in financing their ambitions than in France. Under these conditions, venality could not be employed as a security to the same degree as in France, and it was reasonable to leave it to voevodas and chancellery staff to pocket this revenue. Tatishchev reported that in the seventeenth century, there was a so-called "*oklad*" to be paid for any position as a town voevoda.[682] From the tsar's point of view, it was reasonable to limit this practice, but impossible to stamp it out.[683] The same was true for bribery and *kormlenie*, which can in this respect be addressed as the nearest suitable institutional mechanism available to the tsar for financing at least his administrative, and to some degree military, personnel. In France corporate concerns over venality could cover interests directed against the strengthening of the crown's power, seeking to obtain the privilege of disposal of offices by patronage and sale of offices in their own hands.[684] Venality and *kormlenie* in Muscovy, while giving the tsar additional, if not readily convertible, sources of income, strengthened these very separate interests of noble clans and chancellery corporations, although they did not enjoy the same kind of institutional guarantees granted to them in France.

Kormlenie did not enjoy the same judicial privileges fortifying its usufructuary against the intrusion of the princely state as did secular officials in France in the tradition of *beneficium*. While in France tax collectors were sometimes simply chased away[685], in Siberia the judicial leverage of the tsar allowed the *Personenverband* to await investigation, while taking suitable measures. Entitlements of the holders of the office of voevoda were much less fixed, and more contingent on community approval, than in Western Europe, which meant that the community had perhaps even more influence on the office holder than in the West.[686] However, any evaluation of the degree of this influence hinges on the relative power of the voevoda and the local community.

The conventional image of the corrupted voevodas of Siberia is slightly misleading, since contemporary norms knew no concept similar to the modern idea

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[682] Vershinin, *Voevodskoe*, 190 n.59; Chicherin, *Oblastnyia*, 85

[683] On attempts to prohibit *kormlenie*, see Lantzeff, *Siberia*, 19-24. For a discussion of the issue of prohibition, see Enin, *Kormlenie*, 267-305

[684] Reinhard, "Kreditproblem", 230-1

[685] Mettam, Roger, *Power and Faction*, Oxford 1988, 312-3, passim

[686] In France as in many other European and some non-European countries, officially approved and managed venality has been observed: Reinhard, "Kreditproblem", 233-5 n.6-18

of corruption. "*Korystoliubie*" and "*likhoimanie*", the two terms used in accusations were both directed against excess charges, not against bribery as such.[687] Out of his confiscated belongings to the value of 12,742 roubles, Vocvoda Frantsbckov of Iakutsk was granted 2,000 roubles on investigation.[688] This was nearly three times the average allowance to a voevoda leaving for Iakutsk, and in principle he was not allowed to return more than he had taken in.[689] Yet this kind of accountability was only one of the principles governing Muscovite chancelleries. In 1698, voevoda Mikhail M. Arsen'ev of Iakutsk petitioned the Siberian chancellery concerning his belongings, more than eleven thousand roubles, which he had sent to Nerchinsk in 1696. At Udinsk, local cossacks rebelling against their voevoda confiscated the whole caravan consisting of fifteen horses, and finally divided the booty among them. The voevoda did not attempt to hide the fact that he engaged in trade while he was voevoda in Iakutsk. He used the very same language rebellious cossacks used in negotiating the terms of trade with the Siberian chancellery – in order to be able to serve faithfully, he needed the tsar's support and clemency. He explained that when he was appointed to this distant post, he borrowed from *gost'* Aleksei Filat'ev in Moscow and in Iaroslavl from *gost'* Semen Luzin and their *prikazchiki* in Tobol'sk and Eniseisk to be able to travel. After his arrival in Iakutsk, he received a letter from the *prikazchiki* ordering him to send the money, or, preferably, furs bought for this money "for trade with China" to Filat'ev's *prikazchik* Aleksei Lobanov at Nerchinsk. Arsen'ev stressed that his debt was due for repayment and that he stood to lose, among other securities, his hereditary villages, rendering him incapable of serving. He claimed that to meet the target he had to sell "my attire, and my wife's and children's, and all my table silver". The chancellery decree indeed accepted this application for an allowance, thus underlining again its function as an insurance for the tsar's servitors, and ordered the new vocvoda of Irkutsk, Nikolev, to investigate exactly whether the list of Mikhail Arsen'ev's loans coincided with documented loans the *prikazchiki* were to produce "whenever next they touch Irkutsk". This was done not without suspicion. The chancellery had long noticed that revenues from

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[687] Potter, "Payment?", 21-34
[688] Leont'eva, *Zemleprokhodets*, 94
[689] Lantzeff, *Siberia*, 48-9

Siberian towns were falling, and put the blame on the voevodas. In Mikhail Arsen'ev's case it also noted that in one year of his tenure alone, the amount of *iasak* fell from about thirty-nine bundles of forty sables each to just nineteen bundles, while there was ample evidence of sables in private trade with China.[690] Whatever the outcome of this investigation, like others, it did not destroy the family's reputation and connections.[691] The chancellery weighed up the relative importance of the principles of accountability and provisioning for its servitors even in an obvious case of illegal transactions, and voevodas knew they could rely on officials turning a blind eye to a certain amount of illegal trade on their part.

Furthering their interests, voevodas by no means inevitably fell out with the *Personenverband.* As with other cases in European Russia, satisfied inhabitants sometimes sent petitions to Moscow to ask for another period for their "*milostivyi*" voevoda. "Merciful" was the word used in contrast to "*likhii*"; in other words these voevodas managed to respect the limits of the cossacks' endurance, and proved their qualities as leaders of the *Personenverband* in towns on the steppe rim such as Tiumen', Turinsk and Tomsk.[692] The petition asking not to exchange a musketeers' and cossacks' *golova* in Tiumen' in 1686-7, in which his cossacks and musketeers argued that I. Tekut'ev, a Tiumen' *syn boiarskii*, caused them no "*obidy*" and "*nalogi*". Although their petition contradicted an already existing decree of appointment, it was granted by the chancellery.[693] "Merciful" never meant that the voevoda lived on thin air or on his savings or credit alone. Rather, he was "fed" by the population, relying on traditional habits of *kormlenie.* Though it was officially abrogated several times in the late sixteenth and during the seventeenth centuries, of necessity this habit lived on.[694] As long as the voevoda, *prikazchik* or other officials were perceived as "merciful", they could rely on this voluntary, generalised

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[690] RGADA f.1121 op.1 no.394 ll.10-17 (decree)

[691] Mikhail's two daughters were among the *boiaryshni* (ladies-in-waiting) of Peter's sister, tsarevna Natal'ia. In their company at St. Petersburg in 1704 was Marta, daughter of a Livonian servant who was to become Catherine I: Bushkovitch, *Peter*, 237; Barsukov, A.P., *Spiski gorodovykh voevod Moskovskogo gosudarstva XVII st.*, St. Petersburg 1902, 283

[692] Aleksandrov, *Vlast'*, 124-5; Vershinin, *Voevodskoe*, 33

[693] Nikitin, *Sluzhilye*, 49

[694] Lantzeff, *Siberia*, 19-32

exchange of favours.[695] Thus, recently arrived cossacks at Tara gave their voevoda "from all the *sotnia* ten *pud* of salt from their salt allowances".[696] During the bloody war of conquest against the Buryats voevoda Pokhabov received Buryat slaves on a permanent basis from his thankful cossacks for his manifold "successful" campaigns.[697] His fall occurred characteristically after the Buryats fled their homelands and rode off to join the steppe Mongols. Attempts on the part of the *iasak* people to obtain exemption from the *iasak* bringing the voevoda bribes were common – in such a situation everyone in the district could be satisfied. As long as the voevoda did not try to take more than the cossacks conceded, they could make a profit from buying up some of the better furs not given as tribute to the tsar.[698] Still, there was the danger of alienating the chancellery, which paid for their livelihood and might reduce the salary; the limits were defined by the inevitable fluctuations in annual yields the chancellery could not assess from a distance.

Even the voevodas who at one point or another of their term of office were deposed by their cossacks knew better times when the latter had voluntarily offered presents. When Aleksei Bashkovskii arrived in Krasnoiarsk district, he was offered a sable worth twenty *altyn* by his later foe Aleksei Iarlykov; altogether, he received sixty-three sables while travelling to Krasnoiarsk. In town, he met with the local cossacks, Bukharian and Russian merchants and trappers offering another 175 sables. On arrival in the same town of Krasnoiarsk, Semen Durnovo was offered a horse worth ten roubles, before he fell out with the population for supporting his predecessors, the Bashkovskiis.[699] A similar condition could ensue on holidays and name-days of the tsar and his family, or when the voevodas were invited for dinner. The latter events took place in the homesteads of clerks, *piatidesiatniki* and even rank-and-file cossacks; often, the voevoda and his wife were presented with furs during dinner. These were not the exalted voevodas presented in literature; they returned the favours, in particular to their own partisans once the *Personenverband*

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[695] Davies, Brian, "The Politics of Give and Take: Kormlenie as Service Remuneration and Generalized Exchange 1488-1726", in: Kleimola, A.M. (ed.), *Culture and Identity in Muscovy 1359-1584*, Moscow 1997, 39-67

[696] Nikitin, *Sluzhilye*, 132

[697] Okladnikov, *Ocherki,* 113-4

[698] Ogloblin, *Obozrenie* pt. IV, 132

[699] Bakhrushin, *Krasnoiarsk*, 171

had split. The rebels therefore called the voevoda's partisans "convivial scandal-mongering informers and brawlers (*prikormlennye ushniki i gorlany*)", referring to the methods in which they interfered with decisions of the *Personenverband* and its relationship with the voevoda.[700] Conviviality served as a reliable means to smooth personal relations as well as to influence the *Personenverband* at large. It also worked the other way round: *Dvorianin* Fedor Tutolmin, who was appointed by Tobol'sk voevodas to investigate the rebellion against the two Bashkovskiis in Krasnoiarsk, on 18 February 1696 arrived in Krasnoiarsk, where Bashkovskii did not agree to hand over the symbols of office – the town's seal and keys – and refused to account for his residency. Dismayed, Tutolmin declared the voevoda should be starved out, while he lived in the hamlets surrounding Krasnoiarsk, distilled alcohol and arranged banquets for the *sudeiki* rebellious Krasnoiarians had elected. In August he received official orders to investigate Aleksei Bashkovskii's tenure. During the investigation, he closely observed local customs, while Krasnoiarians offered him pre-emptive gifts.[701]

Despite attempts by historians to distinguish between legal offers and illegal corruption, there were no clear boundaries. A voevoda fallen into disgrace with the local *Personenverband* could find it difficult to prove whether he received gifts on grounds of generalised exchange or simply forced people to pay tribute. In 1695 Krasnoiarsk cossacks for the first time tried to corner A. Bashkovskii; they approached the clerk of the voevoda office Semen Nadein demanding that he write a report claiming Aleksei Bashkovskii peculated the furs Moscow sent as a reward for their victory over the nomadic Tubin tribe. Yet Nadein changed the text to report that they had voluntarily offered the furs in honour of the voevoda, as "*pochest'*", and Bashkovskii returned this favour by offering "drinks, while some took money".[702] In 1654 cossacks deposed the voevoda of Tiumen', Lodygin, on charges of corruption, after only a few months in office. This was even more suspicious as they did not even mention one of the reasons which incensed them most: Lodygin had tried to

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[700] Aleksandrov, *Vlast'*, 154, 199, 247; Pokrovskii, "'Slovu'", 40; Pokrovskii, *Tomsk*, 321; Loginovskii, K.D., *Materialy k etnografii Zabaikal'skikh kazakov*, Vladivostok 1904; Vershinin, *Voevodskoe*, 89; Bakhrushin, *Krasnoiarsk*, 174, 183. Dal', V., *Tolkovyi slovar'*, vol.4 „*ukho*". See also Chapter I.

[701] Bakhrushin, *Krasnoiarsk*, 183

[702] Ibid., 171

stamp out illegal distillation, one of the backbones of the town's economy in the vicinity of the agricultural district of western Siberia.[703]

However, there are many examples of the use of outright graft and blackmail on the part of voevodas pressing for gifts – the favourite means was a short, yet extendable stay in the town's gaol during harvest; beatings were common as well, an evil which was not restricted to Siberia.[704] Until he was relieved or deposed, the voevoda enjoyed the competencies of an unrestricted despot. However, it was not advisable to make use of these powers too extensively. After the relief of the voevoda of Nerchinsk, I. Nikolev, in 1707 – he was not the first voevoda in this town bearing his family name[705] – the prisoner Gordei sent a petition to the Siberian chancellery. The conflict with the voevoda unfolded during a trial over the quarrels between Gordei and A. Plotnikov. Gordei was dissatisfied with the sluggish business of the court that "made him suffer from red-tape for a long time" and accused the voevoda. Nikolev answered angrily:

> "Who dares to give orders to me? No one dares, even if you carry on litigation for five years."[706]

As in one of the typical cases of the seventeenth century of a "sovereign's word" or "indecent words", the voevoda further asked:

> "Who gives orders to me? I am myself tsar in the same way as in Moscow tsar Petr Alekseevich: I do whatever I want. Nobody gives orders to me. Not only in Nerchinsk, even in Moscow I would be tsar. It is I who deals with such affairs in the voevoda's office! And in Moscow they do not agree with my decisions! And nobody will change my decisions!"

This amounted to verbal abuse of the tsar and the expression of pretensions to the tsar's throne. His words, however, returned to haunt Nikolev: Although Gordei was imprisoned clad in fetters and "starved twelve weeks", as the prisoner asserted, the problems for the voevoda started when Nikolev was relieved. Nikolev freed Gordei and sent him to the steam bath where his confessor, priest Grigorii Nikiforov, the town major (*gorodnichii*) Savva Bolotov and the *syn boiarskii* Danila Gavrilov

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[703] Aleksandrov, *Vlast'*, 186
[704] Enin, *Kormlenie*, 132-3
[705] See 220
[706] Akishin, *Politseiskoe*, 76

attended him. Obviously Nikolev enjoyed the support of the *Personenverband*, since nobody else voiced allegations. In the *bania*, nevertheless, Gordei's reception committee urged him not to sue the voevoda and offered 500 roubles compensation. Gordei was uncompromising in his adherence to due process, and perhaps motivated by his duty to denounce a sovereign's word – he rejected the offer. Even when Nikolev put him in prison again, he still declined the same proposal a second time. In his petition, the main incrimination apart from the sovereign's word was for Gordei's own sufferings, but he did not forget to report that Nikolev had robbed Tungus *iasak*-payers.[707] It could prove hard for a voevoda to evade legal persecution in Siberian service under the old system. This could even be the case if the *Personenverband* did not support the litigant, although this was an exception to the rule. Not without reason Siberian voevodas' kin in Moscow warned them to keep a low profile, and reminded them of cases in which the tsar had punished voevodas when their subjects made allegations against them. Although instructions restricted their prerogatives in traditional, sacral terms, these constraints could be as binding as any.[708] Presumption, as in Nikolev's case, was nevertheless always close at hand – the *Personenverband's* support could temporarily make a man feel and behave like a despot.

Cultural Blindness or Reasonable Flexibility? Leitideas and the Supply of Siberian Servitors

While social hierarchy in the administration provided a fairly rigid straitjacket, not everything was decided by its constraints.[709] Nevertheless, a strict social hierarchy as expressed in the law was irreconcilable with modern administrative law. In 1649, members of the duma ranks – the committee formulating the *Ulozhenie* was chosen from among them – were given far-reaching immunity from the provisions of the *Ulozhenie* concerning administrative misdemeanour.[710] Brown has noted that by our lights there is a glaring contradiction: While members of the governing apparatus filled their purses very well through tacit extortion, at the same time they performed essential tasks, especially in national defence, with reasonable competency.

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[707] Ibid., 76-7
[708] Lantzeff, *Siberia*, 51
[709] Kivelson, "Bitter"
[710] Brown, "Neither", 2-4

Nevertheless, we should not fall into the trap of diagnosing a "certain cultural blindness towards condoning bribery and gift-giving".[711] Historians have found it difficult to reconcile the prevalence of bribes with the service ethos of the Muscovite civil administration. However, this is due to the failure to grasp the point that a noble might have to pay a bribe to acquire a position, but his successful retention of that position, and opportunities for profit, depended upon his loyal performance of service. At the same time, he could accept bribes in the form that society condoned, or else by outright robbery, if local power relations were favourable. For example if there were no local organisations of self-administration of the *posad*, there was no other way than to use force to acquire local surpluses.[712]

Despite the very different understanding of legitimacy of taking payments by government officials, there were many cases in which chancellery officials were sued for bribery.[713] In fact, as the rebellions show, Muscovites had the same problems with these contradictions as we have, but had to assess them in a very different context and environment. Thus the very populace that had as recently as June 1648 successfully demanded the heads of several of Muscovy's most influential boyars, through its own elected representatives agreed with the 1649 *Ulozhenie*, which contained explicit stipulations partially exempting the boyars and other Duma ranks from the afflictions of administrative law.[714] Notably, the 1649 *Ulozhenie* stands out for its clear, understandable language among comparable collections of law, and it was the last – and largest compilation of dialogic law, as opposed to the monologic law promulgated in the eighteenth century.[715] There is no doubt that these sudden changes were contradictory, and most likely, those who made them also perceived them as incongruous. In an ambiguous situation, Muscovites could not be expected to act in an uncontradictory way.

We may not succeed in interpreting Muscovite legal consciousness without contextualising these seemingly contradictory points of view. It is necessary to adjust the framework of interpretation so that we are able to account for a quite different

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[711] Ibid., 15-19, 20-1
[712] Enin, *Kormlenie*, 305-26
[713] Hellie, *Ulozhenie*, chapt.10 no.150
[714] Brown, "Neither", 4
[715] Schmidt, Christoph, *Sozialkontrolle in Moskau*, Stuttgart 1996, 395-7

environment. In this investigation, it is essential to differentiate not just between social groups, but also their different needs and interests, which were not necessarily unified throughout a social group, or in time and space. In other words, a cossack sent to Moscow, Eniseisk or Tobol'sk to represent the interests of his comrades was indeed on one level interested in pressing for them. On another level, however, he could find it difficult to resist interests and opportunities that offered themselves in the different setting of Moscow, or, for that matter, on the road between his home town and the capital. Communities in the Russian north attempted to institutionalise this fundamental clash of interest in one and the same person by prohibiting all private enterprise on journeys undertaken on behalf of the community and financed by it, a condition to which the petitioners had to swear an oath; moreover, they constantly exchanged letters with their communities.[716] At the same time, Siberian cossack groups already found it hard, if not impossible, to formulate such stringent rules. After all, men absent for a year or two simply could not be asked to abstain from all private business, particularly when the dangers of the road and the rivers and portages inflicted by nature and widespread brigandage were taken into account. Furthermore, petitioners were likely to carry the fur *iasak*, or bring back the sovereign's salary. Thus, by standing up for the rights of their comrades, and enduring all the risks of the road including that of being arrested in Moscow or by one of the fellow voevodas of the most influential of their foes back at home, cossacks found themselves elevated to a position which bestowed on them the most valuable reward available in Muscovy: that of being close to the tsar ("they saw the sovereign's clear eyes" in an audience), but also gave them temporal sway over substantial material means.[717] In this regard, they suddenly resembled the very hated chancellery staff that allegedly interfered with the tsar's ways of justice. It comes as no surprise that they reacted in the same time-honoured way as did the chancellery staff. According to a decree signed by *d'iak* Vasilii Altemira at the Siberian chancellery on 16th March 1699, they often misused their temporary power and put some of the money aside for their own benefit, while claiming they were forced to bribe the chancellery staff excessively. However, the chancellery staff denied any

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[716] Bogoslovskii, *Samoupravlenie*, vol.II, 64
[717] Pokrovskii, *Tomsk*, 266

such allegations, claiming they had only accepted money "for their nourishing...according to the cossacks' *vybori*" which the messengers carried. The decree demanded an investigation to be held, and also ordered the voevoda to ask the cossacks whether they deemed two *dengi* per rouble worth of salary an acceptable fee (*za rabotu*) "to preclude further quarrels about this issue". According to voevoda Nikolev, the cossacks accepted.[718] Adding to the evidence concerning the role of negotiation in Siberia, this is the only known decree defining fees during Peter's reign throughout Russia[719], and what is more – it was promulgated as dialogical law, rather than a one-sided command.

Time and distance were particularly prone to change the way an institution was interpreted. Fedor Pushchin experienced irritating shifts of *leitideas*, which dominated according to the space he passed through and the social groups he encountered when he returned from Moscow. With the delegation of petitioners he headed, Pushchin returned only on 6th April, over one and a half months after the chancellery's decrees arrived in Tomsk. His pace was slow, and the delegation was in an optimistic mood. On their way along the river Ob' they called on the Ostiaks to come to Tomsk since they carried the sovereign's decree of favour. Even in Tomsk, cossacks were first inclined to believe that essential news was arriving. They were further persuaded by the convincing stories the "*moskovshchiny*", as the members of the delegation were tellingly called in Tomsk, had to report. The tsar had received them, and they carried the decrees that instituted proceedings against the first voevoda Shcherbatyi. They had even received a guarantee that Shcherbatyi was to be put before court, and could cite the tsar's word that his visitors from the "sovereign's faraway Siberian frontier" were not to fall into disgrace for their measures against the voevoda.[720]

In Tomsk, however, they met with a completely different assessment of the decrees they carried. Already on 30th July 1648 the new clerk Kliucharev, who had taken the side of voevoda Shcherbatyi, had arrived in Tomsk raising doubts as to whether it could be expected that their rebellion would be accepted as legal.[721] In

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[718] RGADA f.1121 op.1 no.451 ll.160-2 (report)
[719] Potter, "Payment?", 30-3
[720] Pokrovskii, *Tomsk*, 299-302
[721] Ibid., 247

February, the decrees, copies of which Pushchin's delegation carried, had reached Tomsk. The tsar had ordered an investigation of Shcherbatyi's misdemeanours, but at the same time commanded the cossacks to obey him until the new voevodas arrived. Another problem was that the Tomskans had already questioned the authenticity of the very decree that Pushchin brought. Yet for Pushchin and his comrades, at least until they met with the pessimistic mood in Tomsk, the reality of their meeting with the tsar was far stronger than anything written in a decree they may not even have read en route. They carried the tsar's salary paid out in advance, an extra allowance in cloth to pay for the journey, and they had even been able to loot boyars' courts in cooperation with like-minded Moscow rebels, actions which were not condemned by Aleksei Mikhailovich. In September, however, after a pause of several months, the tsar had appointed Trubetskoi, a member of the clientele of his former tutor, B.N. Morozov, to head the Siberian chancellery again. Returned to the position he had held before the rebellion, Trubetskoi, though not daring to deny the Tomsk rebels' demands, included this awkward stipulation in the decree.[722] Some of the delegation's members in Tomsk reiterated the claim that the decree had been changed before it was written down. Pushchin however no longer seemed so convinced. When cornered publicly by *syn boiarskii* Iurii Tupal'skii at the review, he refrained from answering the question as to whether the decree was forged.

In Tomsk, the delegates encountered a very harsh climate for any attempt to appraise their journey positively. If the decrees they carried were authentic, this meant that petitionaries were unable to fulfil in the rebellious capital a task which seemed straightforward from a Tomsk perspective. If, on the other hand, the decrees were forged, it meant that the delegates had obviously only made shady deals in the capital and obtained "stolen property". In meetings of the rebels, they had to listen to exhortations, claiming they were not worth the trust of the *Personenverband*. Others were already promising to make it better – there were already plans for another delegation.

Prince Shcherbatyi reported the verbal clashes during one of these meetings on 11th April, repeating the words of eye-witnesses. In Bunakov's *gornitsa*, more than

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[722] Ibid., 267-70

thirty people met – Il'ia's "advisors", the secretaries, and Fedor Pushchin and the cossack M. Kurkin, who accompanied him to Moscow. Accordingly, Bunakov chided Kurkin:

"Why did you fail to bring the order of execution for Oska [Shcherbatyi]?"

O. Liapa, one of the advisors, shouted:

"Now they, Ostashka Liapa and his comrades, travel to Moscow and they will not go to the boyar courts. But Fedka Pushchin and Mishka Kurkin went to the boyars' courts (*khodili po boiarskim dvorom*), and that is why they did not obtain the order to hang Oska."

Bunakov was not yet satisfied and scolded the delegates:

"Why did you visit the boyars' courts at Moscow [and robbed them during the rebellion] and neglected our common business – you travelled to Moscow to behave like bandits and traitors!"[723]

There was much ambiguity and even doubt whether they had actually accepted some boyar's favours or not. Thus, however inadvertently, delegates faced similar accusations to those they had complained about in Moscow.

Different environments shaped appraisals differently, and since Muscovites, and especially Siberian cossacks, lived in so extremely different environments, this had a tremendous impact on their views. Specifically, to change environments fostered changing needs, and these ultimatively translated into changing leitideas, which were not necessarily stable among the members of one group, or in an individual, in time and space.[724] In the encounter of Pushchin and Kurkin, who returned empty-handed to Tomsk, with their partisans, differences in time, space, opportunity and information even made an action of reprisal against hated boyars look dangerously similar to illicit bribe-taking.

The notion that accountability had to be enforced, so obvious in town rebellions, can be treated as one of the principles which combined in a leitidea. It is quite explicit as a demand in the many collective petitions of the 1620s-1640s, as well as in the rebellions of the 1640s.[725] It may not seem surprising that the tsar and his

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[723] Ibid., 301

[724] On institutions, see 13-29

[725] Aleksandrov, *Vlast'*, 354-5; Bazilevich, K.V. (sost.), *Gorodskie vosstaniia v Moskovskom gosudarstve XVII v.*, Leningrad 1936, 48, 51; Pokrovskii, *Tomsk*, 370

boyars wished to hold officials accountable, and most of their activities in this respect were directed towards an increase in accountability of those ranking below them. The most effective measures, such as the stipulations of the *Ulozhenie,* were directed against corruption and the arbitrary decisions of relatively lowly state secretaries and clerks.[726] However, what does seem surprising is that even the boyars had an interest, if limited, in ensuring the accountability of other boyars. This is very explicit in the encounter between I.I. Saltykov and M.F. Streshnev at Verkhotur'e mentioned in chapter III, where two members of top-ranking clans on the one hand fought for the right to alienate resources, and, on the other hand, to uphold accountability. Yet alienation may not be the right word for what happened in the chancellery system everywhere, and was nevertheless fought about so relentlessly. While for the two boyars the prevailing interest was defined by patronage and the affairs of their kin, one of the means that could prove decisive was to enhance accountability. In such a way, Saltykov could enlist the support of the local population – and what is more, in Siberia at least, the support of the cossacks – as well as the support of the tsar, who was interested in increased accountability and concomitant improved revenues to further foreign political interests, which were paramount for any European princely state.[727]

In fact, the tsar's viewpoint is a very good spot from which to understand why different leitideas could not be reconciled, yet were ultimately accepted as part of the same institutional mechanism. While the tsar benefited from accountability, since this meant that taxation was much more efficient, he – or the regent – nevertheless had to take into account that the means to organise taxation in a fully accountable manner simply did not exist. The problems of collecting taxes in such a vast range of climatically and economically adverse environments meant that the centre could not live off the meagre revenues from one region, but had to rely on many to meet its targets. However, from this an even more vexatious issue arises: Why did the rebellious Muscovites of the seventeenth century not do away with such a voracious, seemingly inadequate centre? While the second leitidea – exterior competition for power – seems at first glance only applicable to the tsar or regent and his or her

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[726] Brown, "Neither", 4; See Forsyth, Wade, *Administrative Law*, 24, 26
[727] See 134-7. Hinrichs, Ernst, *Fürsten und Mächte*, Göttingen 2000, 238-41 and 248-50

immediate entourage, we have to take into account a common threat, which was perceived by Muscovites throughout the century and marked a difference to the common European case. It effected an equally pressing need as the immediate material situation and the quest for accountability of the chancellery system. Seventeenth-century Muscovites all lived, albeit to varying degrees, with the danger of being captured and brought to the slave markets of the south. After Africans south of the Sahara, Eastern Slavs were the second biggest pool of potential victims of slavery. Any state or dominion erected on the East European, and likewise Northern Asian, plains, except perhaps for a nomad confederation, could not but address this threat and misery; otherwise its subjects were simply carried away.[728] The *Ulozhenie* was in part the result of the institutionalisation of this pressing need. It stipulated annual levies for the ransoming of captives[729] at the rate of 0.2 roubles from peasant or *posad* homesteads, service landholdings and hereditary estates. Lower-ranking servitors, such as cossacks, musketeers, artillerymen, gunners, gatekeepers, and others, who were most susceptible to captivity, were taxed at half the rate. These monies were to be collected annually in the Foreign Affairs chancellery on the basis of new census books:

> "so that no one will be omitted from that cash levy because such ransoming is a common act of mercy [for all]. The pious tsar and all Orthodox Christians will receive great recompense from God, as the righteous Enoch said: 'Do not spare gold and silver for your brother, but redeem him, and you will receive a hundred-fold from God.'"[730]

In the original, the passage reads both times: "*iskuplenie...iskupite ego*" – to ransom/to redeem are two aspects of the same word, commonly used in a slightly different context for "the Lord, your redeemer", among others, in the Books of Enoch of the Russian Orthodox bible. This citation, however, is not found in the Russian Orthodox Bible;[731] it is therefore all the more significant for the emphasis put on the tsar's obligation for ransoming. The *Ulozhenie* also stipulated rates to be paid for ransom, in a progression according to rank and the circumstances of

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[728] Khodarkovsky, *Steppe*, 222-4

[729] Etymologically, the term used in the 1649 *Ulozhenie*, "*polonianik*", is close to booty, fitting to small-scale steppe warfare and nomadic raids. See Vasmer, Max, *Ethymologisches Wörterbuch*, vol.2, entry "*polon*". *SRIa XI-XVII*, vol.16, entry "*polonianik*". Cf. Hellie, *Ulozhenie*, 17.

[730] Hellie, *Ulozhenie*, 17

[731] *Simfoniia ili slovar'-ukazatel' k Sviashchennomu Pisaniiu*, (red.) mitropolita ... Pitirima, 3 vols., Moscow 1988-2000, vol.II, 864-5, entry "iskuplenie"

captivity.[732] Many publications dealing with the Time of Troubles also supported and propagated this leitidea of the tsar as the pious protector of the poor and redeemer of captives.[733]

The dire need arising from the defencelessness of the frontier, expressed in the language of Russian Orthodoxy, also made the chancellery system indispensable. Without it, there could be no successful extraction of the means to accommodate the steppe nomads, not to speak of the Sisyphus-like attempt to construct defences on the open southern steppe frontier which commenced in the 1630s. It was in particular the defence of the southern frontier that Muscovite higher officials organised adequately.[734] If military tasks were accomplished ineffectually, the military and administrative establishment became susceptible to forceful restructuring.[735]

To underpin the image of pious concern for the Orthodox flock, the tsars also paid their troops on campaign, and punished arbitrary requisitions among the local population.[736] Such pious concern was advisable also regarding valuable troops in general. Muscovy's agrarian economy was still oriented at subsistence rather than at the market, and most of its products never found their way to market: In critical moments Moscow could not divert supplies on the markets in sufficient amounts. It thus faced the choice either to leave its valuable troops at the mercy of the forces of inadequate markets and to the vicissitudes of foraging while on campaign. Therefore, efforts at creating and developing an in-kind supply system in the south, where troops were needed to repel nomad and Ottoman forces were encouraged and sustained to a degree that would not have been acceptable in Western Europe.[737]

This did not mean that supply was always adequate. The evidence about encroachments and atrocities of troops on their way to Siberia is derived from official complaints, and related court proceedings often hint that the troops felt they

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[732] Hellie, *Ulozhenie*, 17-8

[733] Rowland, Daniel, "Did Russian Literary Ideology Place any Limits on the Power of the Tsar", *RR* vol.49.2 (1990), 125-55, here: 141; Timofeev, Ivan, *Vremennik Ivana Timofeeva*, podgot. O.A. Derzhavinoi, Moscow 1951, 65, 72

[734] See the meticulous reports of town construction and fortification, garrisoning and administration in a southern frontier town: Davies, *Governors*, vols. 1-2 passim

[735] Brown, "Neither", 20; Keep, John, *Soldiers of the Tsar*, Oxford 1985, 95-140; Hellie, *Enserfment*, 232, 258-9; Hughes, Lindsey, *Russia in the Age of Peter the Great*, New Haven 1998, 30, 63-4

[736] Smith, "Logistics", 49 and passim; Floria, "Nemoevskii", 110-11; Bushkovitch, *Peter*, 266, 288, 312

[737] Stevens, *Soldiers*, 11 and chs. 2-3.

were themselves victimised and cheated, and thus merely took their due in the areas which profited most from the fur trade. The picture is ambiguous, with voevodas extorting additional dues from inhabitants of the regions they passed through, while the chancellery took measures to control the material benefit the voevodas could derive – when they left Moscow, their belongings were measured, documented, and compared to a set table of allowed goods to curb smuggling.[738] They were also controlled at the Siberian border, at Verkhotur'e. Cossacks and musketeers were flogged and sometimes executed, although this could only apply to cases that the *Personenverband* did not cover. The older historiography believed it was evidence of the futility of complaints that government did not always pay recompense to victims.[739] On the other hand, the seizure of voevodas' possessions on the part of the tsar had the benefit of encouraging those eager to show their trustworthiness, and the side-effect of filling the treasure for such purposes as the redemption of slaves. In the same vein, demanding actual recompense of the victims in every case, although this was exactly what the *Ulozhenie* demanded, actually meant a serious over-assessment of early-modern administrative capabilities.[740] After all, there was no means of verifying the potentially inflated claims of village or town elders, as even elaborated lists of individual claims were usually not checked against evidence. Thus, beyond internal divisions of the land communes and awareness of their powerlessness, was one uncommonly positive reason for the surprisingly low inclination of Russian peasants to rebel.[741] In this regard, their perception of the "pious and merciful" tsar was firmly rooted in the care the tsar's troops were ordered to take, and even more so the chancelleries supervising them.[742] At the same time, however, cossacks could use the *iasak*-payers as a bargaining chip in negotiations or as "remuneration" in case regular recompenses were not delivered.[743]

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[738] Lantzeff, *Siberia*, 49

[739] Butsinskii, *Zaselenie*, 191-4

[740] Hellie, *1649 Ulozhnie*, ch. 10 no.150. Cf. the amount of paperwork generated over the recompense of the citizens of Reval by the Swedish administration, involving properties valued incomparably higher: Frost, *Northern*, 309-10

[741] Moon, *Peasantry*, 239, 243

[742] Bushkovitch, *Peter*, 266

[743] Aleksandrov, *Vlast'*, 22-54; Davies, "Chigirin", 104, 113-8; Slezkine, *Mirrors*, 3-47; Smith, "Logistics", 49-50; Ogloblin, *Obozrenie* pt. III, 233

Perceptively, Niemojewski included his descriptions of the army in 1606 in a consideration of the income and expenditure of the tsar's court. In order to prove the tyrannical character of the tsar's reign, Fletcher concentrated in one of his largest chapters on the tremendous amount of income from all regions, and the many means available to the tsar to increase them. Niemojewski, however, put the income at 150,000-200,000 roubles, i.e. about ten times lower than Fletcher and, unlike him, systematically considered the outgoings of the court. Regularly-paid salaries made for the most important part of the service relationship as far as Siberian cossacks were concerned, and for the greatest part of spending in town, as chapter II has shown. Service remuneration generally constituted a large part of expenses.[744] The reliability of payments, limited as they were, was the stock-in-trade of the relationship between the tsar and his military and chancellery personnel. Where this was not the case – and, not surprisingly under early modern conditions, it was quite frequently not the case – those at the receiving-end of the deal felt entitled to rebel[745] or to accept payments in a semi-illegal grey zone.

It is instructive to consider the context in which these institutions developed. After the decline of the Mongol empire and its successors, the Muscovite grand princes, formerly entrusted with raising the Golden Horde's tax, were increasingly capable of disbursing these means partly for their own ends. They used them to attract uprooted Tatar warriors in growing numbers, which were also remunerated with *pomest'e*.[746] Contrary to what is often perceived as mainly a measure of depriving lofty nobles of their regional identity and powerbase[747], in the context of steppe warfare the obligation to serve the tsar personally in Moscow was an expedient way to pacify nomad nobles who otherwise engaged in raiding and in the slave trade. Prohibiting arbitrary requisitions in this context was a means of agitating for the tsar, since it set Muscovy apart from the unreliable steppe warriors competing for the meagre agricultural surplus. Moscow could fall back on this nomadic factor to establish authority. Yet all the tsar demanded was prompt payment of taxes – something learned from the Mongols. Therefore, linking the levying of the tax to

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[744] Floria, "Nemoevskii", 113
[745] Ibid., 111-3
[746] On *pomest'e* as Tatar heritage: Ostrowski, *Mongols*.
[747] Pipes, *Old Regime*, [German version] 102-3

Christian notions moved Muscovy closer to Europe. Showing concern for the population's lot served Moscow well even in the more central regions, where a semi-nomadic lifestyle reappeared in the guise of banditry, which was often committed in alliance with local strongmen.[748] Therefore centralisation and bureaucratisation, though by no means a remedy to exploitation in general, served the common man in a very basic, existential way.

Consequently, despite the wrath about the opportunistic behaviour of chancellery staff, especially among the gentry who lost their peasants during raids, there was at least an equal interest in supplying officials in whatever way seemed feasible. In general, they could not be disparaged as exploiters, even if at times such a notion was deservedly widespread among Russians. Others would take their place, and this was not due to the slavish nature of the Russians, but on the contrary, was perceived as a concerted effort to overcome the threat of slavery for all individuals in the steppeland.[749] Contrary to what we are used to think, though, it was perfectly rational to believe that the tsar was merciful, but some of the boyars "evil" advisors, since Orthodox notions were so central – not only – to ransoming.

Since Muscovy was cash-starved, and could only fortify the steppe frontier by constant overstretching of resources, the centre hardly commanded the means to compensate administrative personnel. In a similar vein as the cossacks who were co-opted – albeit in a different sense than the nobles – and allowed to participate in trade at a reduced tax rate, members of the *duma* ranks were given dispensation from many strictures of administrative law. They became usufructuaries of their own service obligations, thereby making sure if not that they always worked according to the rule, but that they actually went where they were ordered, and at least performed a job. There is little evidence available to persuade us that all chancelleries were performing inadequately on a constant basis.[750] Similarly, positions of power in a frontier setting, such as the *prikazchiki*, were allowed to participate in the *usus fructus* and thus granted dispensation from the stipulations of certain decrees. In 1685/1686 two Irkutsk cossacks were sent to collect the *iasak* and the tithe. A decree

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[748] Boškovska, "Bojaren", 347, 376
[749] See chapter III; Rustemeyer, "Verrat", 272; Novombergskii, *Slovo*, tom I, 537
[750] Hellie, *Slavery*; Brown, "Administrative", 20; Davies, *Governors*, vols.1-2 passim

of the tsar dated 1681/1682 stipulated that such *prikazchiki* were not eligible to receive their regular salary. In the way of an exception, the document noted, the two cossacks nevertheless received their salary since they "are sent involuntarily according to the sovereign's decree as *prikazchiki* to serve".[751] It did not take Petrine rationalisation from above to make Muscovy's *prikaznye liudi* aware of the potential for calculated dispensation from administrative law. As the next chapter will show, there can be no doubt that ordinary cossacks detested such behaviour. At times, they rebelled against it; at other times, however, they relied on the very same persons to overcome and investigate administrative misdemeanours. Yet on the other hand, this exemplifies a typical problem in administrating Siberia – and Russia as a whole: The gap between potential revenues and the risks and hardships of collecting them in a very thinly populated country could only be overcome if a great part of revenues was systematically allocated to a tiny, motivated minority. "Involuntarily", they went to serve and become wealthy.

Thus, in the leitidea concerning the supply of officials, or feeding, a wide array of needs overlapped. Consequently, a voevoda could be granted a pardon even if the local population opposed him, while the rebels were still treated with some consideration. As has been shown, a voevoda had different options during his period of office – he could become a popular leader of the *Personenverband* either by undertaking a successful campaign or by co-operating with cossack groups wishing to side-step regulations on *iasak* collection. Yet most of the voevodas – except in Tobol'sk and Verkhotur'e, and to an already lesser extent in the more important regional centres such as Tomsk and Eniseisk – were of modest social background, *pomeshchiki* or members of impoverished lines of great noble families.[752] They had an incentive to serve faithfully, seeking to be rewarded with a larger land and salary allowance by the tsar. Osip Shcherbatyi was one of these carcerists, and a desperate one at that. As his 1654 petition for reward describes vividly, from his first allowance he never managed actually to receive what was due to him. Old enmities between his family and a chancellery clerk blocked rewards and payments, and fire and siege played their part in impoverishing him. While he actively and quite

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[751] RGADA f.1121 op.1 no.82 ll.35-7, 65-8 (receipts)
[752] Vershinin, *Voevodskoe*, 148-183; Bakhrushin, "Voevody", 262

successfully sought the profit of the sovereign's treasury, he understandably also furthered his personal welfare. Tomsk cossacks were righteously outraged by his nominally illegal trading enterprises, among others monopolising the Kalmyk market and exploiting cossack and other labour. Yet in their dealings with this ambitious, but impoverished noble they adhered mostly to the leitidea of accountability and security in the frontier area, coupled with a good deal of self-interest expressed in terms of the tsar's profit and piety. A leitidea is never coherent, since it expresses partly-diverging needs in a field of conflicting and mutually contradicting interpretations which prevail only at a given time, in a given location and social group.[753] For their part, Shcherbatyi and his imprisoned partisans stressed their merits and the profit Shcherbatyi had made for the tsar, and accordingly interpreted the sovereign's affair. For the latter part of his period in Tomsk, however, he was unable to follow his aims, and in material terms this was the Tomskans' most tangible success. From the government's point of view, both objectives were entirely valid, and Shcherbatyi, having received for more than twenty years a meagre seventeen roubles and 450 quarters of land allowance, was awarded an additional thirty-eight roubles and 250 quarters.[754] While in principle, no one could object if the enterprising and poor among the tsar's servitors filled their pockets, there was a limit to such assertiveness. This limit depended on the situation, on the relative power of the involved parties, and was therefore contested by all available means.

Conclusion

Restraining the arbitrariness of chancellery personnel, supplying them and the diverse elites, and military defence capability as well as ransoming from captivity were three discernible basic needs throughout the zone of interpenetration of the steppe and agriculture. Concomitant principles were protest against the "strong people" as well as red tape (*volokita*), the principles of general exchange and remuneration, and the image of the pious tsar – the redeemer. None of these principles, mutually exclusive in part, though also overlapping, could finally win the upper hand, and they never appeared in a "pure" form. Yet in a given setting of time,

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[753] Rehberg, "Institutionenwandel", 101-4
[754] Vershinin, *Voevodskoe*, 95-8

space and social entity the struggle to interpret the processes of institutionalisation, which was common to all of Muscovy yielded temporarily obligatory results. Leitideas formed from partly contradictory principles and cannot be attributed solely to one social group – in fact they often served to facilitate communication between members of a clientèle. While peasants and townsmen fled from serfdom and from tax and service obligations, for example, others who were left behind had a very strong interest in binding people to the land, to make sure tax quotas were met. In Siberia, cossacks quite easily came to occupy the very position they had only recently fervently fought against, and did not behave much different from their foes either. Whole groups of cossacks sometimes found themselves in a powerful position, and practiced, for example, bribery, which they otherwise and before had feverishly fought, to further their own interests.

Administrative law provided a degree of stability in this otherwise highly volatile environment. This was a feeling that the opponents of the *Personenverband* in particular could entertain, as they sued and suddenly found the former supporters of their enemies supported them. In particular, when the *Personenverband* could no longer rely upon unanimity during investigations, the cossack group lost its power to individuals capable of defending their own interests.

Chapter V Local and Central Power in the Baikal Region 1689-1720

The 1696-1698 Transbaikalian rebellion was virtually ignored before Aleksandrov and Pokrovskii's detailed account published in 1991. The only previous account struggled to apply the inappropriate paradigm of peasants' war to Siberia.[755] It is to the lasting credit of Aleksandrov and Pokrovskii that they have provided a detailed account of this rebellion, portraying the uprising of the Western Transbaikalian cossacks as one of the most organised and purposeful risings in early modern Russia, aiming at nothing less than securing the final expulsion of the voevodas from Siberia. While being elicited by a situation common to Siberia, it intended to establish the self-administration of the *voisko*.[756]

This rebellion was indeed one of the most enduring risings in Russia during the seventeenth century; although its termination cannot be nailed down, the rebels wielded considerable power at least until an official investigation was launched after two years and three months. Despite its length, it is doubtful whether the aim of self-administration was as significant as Aleksandrov and Pokrovskii suggest, especially with regard to their more extreme claims that at the end of the century, the rebels "intended to drive the voevodas out of Siberia". On the threshold of the Petrine reforms, and already confronted with a new age evolving at the centre, though yet more tentatively throughout the frontier, the rebels still drew heavily on the habits and patterns of thought of the seventeenth century frontier. This rebellion is worth examining in detail on account of the cossacks' contradictory reactions to these developments and their attempts to redefine the rules of the game; a detailed investigation of its various stages and aspects ensures that the institutions described so far in detail can be explored in their habitual environment. For it is in their interaction that institutions offer most insight into the changes in Siberian administration and social relations at the turn of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

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[755] Kudriavtsev, F.A., *Vosstaniia krest'ian, posadskikh i kazakov v Vostochnom Sibiri*, Irkutsk 1939. See Map 2.

[756] Aleksandrov, *Vlast'*, 306

Soviet as well as western historians have suggested that conflict in the 1690s around lake Baikal – and not only there – was bound to evolve along the line of cleavage between the impoverished cossacks and the cossack elite.[757] Ordinary cossacks are depicted as a faceless, undifferentiated and unruly mass claiming their rights. The united Transbaikalian cossack garrisons, with the exception of some negligible, but purportedly universally-hated *prikazchiki*, according to this version, marched to Irkutsk, to demand payment of their salaries and to oust the voevoda. In Irkutsk, their demands were met with suspicion, yet this attitude is said not to be representative of the opinion of the general populace. Thus around lake Baikal, there was a united front against the voevoda, with some minor disagreements concerning tactical issues, again traceable to the split between poor cossacks and their more wealthy comrades and immediate superiors. The affluent Irkutsk upper crust, enriching themselves illegally at the expense of ordinary cossacks, unequivocally despised this movement.[758] This view of the events in turn is related to the general tendency of Soviet scholarship on Siberia to overestimate social cleavages and to underestimate the importance of negotiation between the centre and the periphery, and of local initiative as well as the effects of social dislocation in an expanding frontier area. Although it cannot be denied that some of the more established cossacks and *deti boiarskie* suffered during the rebellion, one should be cautious about generalising on the basis of their experiences.

Furthermore, the hypothesis is advanced that these social "problems of life" led the cossacks of Udinsk and Selenginsk to a necessary struggle for the realisation of their socio-political ideas, in this case for "cossack democracy".[759] Ill-defined concepts uncritically transferred from Western discourses such as this cloud our view of Siberian conditions at the turn of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries rather than opening them to comparative investigation.[760]

The rebellion in the Transbaikalian fortresses and towns Selenginsk, Udinsk, Il'insk and Kaban'sk, which also spread to Barguzinsk and Verkholensk started with a treaty signed by the cossacks of the towns and fortresses on the Selenga in early

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[757] Lantzeff, *Siberia*, 65; Ogloblin, vol.III, 103; Butsinskii, *Zaselenie*, 198-99
[758] Aleksandrov, *Vlast'*, 305-16, 322-9, 313
[759] Ibid., 308
[760] See chapter I.

1696. They intercepted a caravan with Irkutsk voevoda Afonasii Savelov's goods bound for China at Posol'skii Mys'. Despite the treaty, which stipulated joint obligations and peaceful relations between the *Personenverbände*, there was conflict between Udinsk and Selenginsk cossacks about the status of the small fortress of Il'insk. While most Il'insk cossacks sympathised with the *prikazchik* Grigorii Turchaninov, Udinsk cossacks replaced him forcibly with *syn boiarskii* Ivan Novikov. Selenginsk cossacks disagreed on this assignment, and appointed Stepan Kazan'. Savelov, who already feared for his position, quickly confirmed him. Yet after this agreement, conflict between Selenginsk and Udinsk persisted, centring on the goods of Anton Savelov, voevoda of Nerchinsk, which were stored in Il'insk. Irkutsk voevoda Afonasii Savelov also attempted to appease the Udinsk cossacks by seizing equipment for distilling alcohol in the villages surrounding Il'insk. He thus let down his former crony Turchaninov, who was protecting the distillers and siphoning off grain supplies for Udinsk. However, this endeavour came to nothing, as the distillers were warned in advance and the Udinsk cossacks were more interested in controlling the distillers themselves.

At the same time, however, the *Personenverbände* of Udinsk and Selenginsk also pursued their common aims, as they tried to explain to the tsar in a common petition. The petitioners, however, were intercepted by Irkutsk cossacks. When the voevoda rejected the demand of the Selenga cossacks for a substantial advance on their salary, 200 Selenga cossacks embarked with the aim of forcing the voevoda to pay out the full credit. Their hope was that the cossacks of Irkutsk, situated across lake Baikal, would join them in the pursuit of what they conceived as a sovereign's affair. However, despite the considerable misgivings of the Irkutsk cossacks concerning their voevoda, Afonasii Savelov, they supported him against the claims they considered baseless. The siege of Irkutsk thus came to nothing. The angry Selenga cossacks plundered several small settlements possessed by *deti boiarskie*. They received a temporary settlement with the abbot of the monastery of the Ascension, although the voevoda did not partake in it. On their way back from Irkutsk in late summer 1696, and after a second futile siege, the Udinsk *Personenverband,* led by Moisei Borisov, seized a cossack trader from Irkutsk on the river Angara, whom they beat and robbed. This event marked the turning point in the rebellion, and the last

common undertaking of Selenginsk and Udinsk cossacks. Growing tension soon led to violence when Udinsk cossacks robbed and injured Stepan Kazan' and his family.

After returning from Irkutsk, Borisov replaced Andrei Beiton as *prikazchik*. In this position of elected *prikazchik* he ruled the town and, with decreasing effectiveness, the Selenga area, for another year. In September 1697 he was accused of a sovereign's affair, relieved by yet another elected *prikazchik*, Ivan Novikov, and found guilty of peculation.

In the meantime, in April 1697, Irkutsk cossacks had overthrown voevoda Savelov who had attempted to seize the opportunity for a second period in office when the relieving voevoda had died on his way from Moscow. The town was effectively ruled by the elected *sud'ia* and Irkutsk *syn boiarskii* Ivan Perfil'ev. After receiving the news of Borisov's deposition, Perfil'ev ordered an investigation in June 1698 before delivery of the Siberian chancellery's decree, which also demanded an investigation but called for restraint. Perfil'ev had some important witnesses interrogated on the Selenga before voevoda Nikolev relieved him in October.

The enquiry acquitted the rebels except for several of the so-called "instigators" who were found guilty exclusively of embezzlement. In the meantime, the *Personenverbände* of the rebels continued to wield considerable influence. In 1701 Nikolev succeeded in catching a number of Borisov's partisans who had been accused by their neighbours, cossacks at Il'insk. At about the same time, there was the trial of Andrei Beiton, the officially-assigned *prikazchik* of Udinsk after Novikov, who nevertheless supported the former rebel *Personenverband*. He was accused of bias by an Irkutsk merchant and a local cossack. While Afonasii Savelov suffered from harassment during the investigation and financial losses by the resolution of the trial, most of the Selenga rebels were never punished.

Two Faces of Power around Lake Baikal

The lower Selenga was a rough and strategically-important frontier region close to the major trade route from Moscow to Beijing, taking the longer way via Nerchinsk and the rivers of northern Manchuria, rather than the shorter route through the Selenga valley and the Mongol steppe, which was considered too dangerous. This thoroughfare more or less bypassed the frontier fortresses in the 1690s, but the

problem with the Manchurian route via Nerchinsk, the bustling emporium for the caravan trade with China, was that it was Nerchinsk cossacks who enjoyed the privilege of accompanying caravans abroad – thus the Selenga cossacks lost out on huge profits.[761] This route was not changed before 1703.[762]

Seven great official caravans left from Nerchinsk for Beijing between 1689 and 1697, while no official caravans went in 1690 or 1694. The staff of a caravan – as many as four hundred people, with hundreds of carts and draught animals, and cattle for food – left Nerchinsk over several days. It included representatives of the wealthy Moscow merchants, the *gosti* or the *gostinnaia sotnia*, minor traders, workers, and a cossack convoy. Most of the staff were hired in Moscow, where the merchants received their passports for travel to China. The staff was nevertheless fluid in composition. Merchants often hired additional local workers to assist in defence, loading, packing, and other activities, and they often left some porters at Nerchinsk or on the Nun-chiang river inside China, to be picked up on the return journey. Although labour costs at Nerchinsk were quite high, anyone who succeeded in making the journey all the way to Beijing found it profitable, because a certain amount of unregistered petty trade was permitted, in particular to cossacks of the convoy, and yields were huge.[763]

Caravans carried Siberian furs, but increasingly, as the huge demand in furs depleted stocks in Siberia, traders also bought furs in European Russia, as well as small amounts of Russian and Western manufactured goods. They brought back tea, nankeens and, most valuable, Chinese silk cloth and garments.[764] While Irkutsk cossacks could not participate to the same degree in this trade, they were still in a favourable position to profit from caravan trade. They sold agricultural products to the caravans which they grew in the moderately fertile valleys around Irkutsk which were safe from nomad intrusions.[765] Grain was also transported and sold at Nerchinsk, where attempts to introduce agriculture had met with less success. Since the cession of Dauria to China – the mythical lost agricultural paradise of the

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[761] Leont'eva, *Sluzhilye*, 305-6
[762] Ibid., 327
[763] Mancall, *China*, 188
[764] Ibid., 182
[765] Spafarii, N., *Kniga, v nei napisano puteshestvie tsarstva Sibirskogo (1675)*, St. Petersburg 1882, 115. Wein, *Sibirien*, 197; "Caert"

Siberian cossacks on the Amur – in the 1689 Treaty of Nerchinsk, the town of Irkutsk had been elevated to an economically favourable position.

Irkutsk and Nerchinsk thus profited from the peace treaty of Nerchinsk concluded by prince Golovin with the new Manchu dynasty. Unfettered Russian expansion in the South-East during the period of internal war in China was curbed by this acknowledgement of the military valour and historic right of the Chinese empire, but trade between the two empires could develop on a heretofore unknown level, an outcome Moscow preferred.[766] Caravan trade in the 1690s-1720s differed substantially from the small-scale frontier trade of the 1680s which had prevailed in Nerchinsk, and which had carried on despite serious warfare on the Amur and the Selenga. Trade across the border during the 1680s was scant, reduced to sporadic exchanges at shifting, informal frontier sites, reminiscent of the informal small-scale cossack trade traversing the Terek in the North Caucasus.[767] At Irkutsk, as in the other larger towns of Siberia such as Tobol'sk or Eniseisk, at the end of the seventeenth century, houses in most cases were two-storeyed or contained a basement dwelling partially above ground level (*podklet*).[768] Throughout the eighteenth century, on a frontier much closer to Moscow, in the North Caucasus, small-scale frontier trade continued to prevail. In the main town of Kizliar, a two-storeyed house remained an exception reserved to the first *ataman* of the Terek-Kizliar host, the Kabardian noble El'murza-Bekovich Cherkasskii, projecting his importance.[769] Irkutsk started to develop already in the late 1680s, and was rebuilt in 1693 with stout fortifications, an inner bailey containing the most important buildings and a surrounding citadel with more buildings; beyond was a third fortified settlement, irregular in shape in contrast to the other two, which was for artisans, peasants and other civilians. In 1699 the town harboured 1,000 inhabitants.[770]

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[766] Mancall, *China*, 156-8

[767] Leont'eva, *Sluzhilye*, 304; Bartenev, Iu., "Geroi Albazina i Daurskoi zemli", *Russkii Arkhiv*, Moscow 1899, kn.II, 318; Ogorodnikov, V.I., *Tuzemnoe i russkoe naselenie na Amure v XVII v.*, Vladivostok 1927, 63-4

[768] Kirillov, V.V., "Proekty 'obraztsovykh domov' razrabotannye S. Remezovym dlia Tobol'ska", *Arkhitekturnoe nasledstvo* no.12, Moscow 1960, 153-68; "Caert": puportedly depicts Irkutsk earlier than 1701.

[769] Barrett, *Edge*, 36

[770] *Chertezh zemli Irkutskogo goroda*; Collins, "Subjugation", 39; Kudriavtsev, F.A., *Irkutsk. Ocherki po istorii goroda*, Irkutsk 1958, 6-29

Clashes between the impoverished Transbaikal towns and prosperous Irkutsk were inescapable, but they were never restricted to mere conflicts between members of two classes or strata however defined. In February 1685, eight rank-and-file cossacks "with comrades" complained about the *prikazchiki* of Kaban'sk and Il'insk to the voevoda at Irkutsk, claiming they had not received any help when they were caught unawares by freezing cold weather on their trip back to Irkutsk. They had sailed four *doshchaniks* with official grain supplies to Udinsk in the summer of 1684, and set out to return in the autumn. When they got stuck in sudden ice on the lower reaches of the Selenga, losing four barges, they went with their sails and anchor to ask *prikazchiki* Emelian Panikadilshchik and Ivan Novikov in nearby Il'insk and Kaban'sk for a replacement *doshchanik*, but received none. This was hardly a coincidence, if the statement of the cossacks from Irkutsk can be trusted, since they were not even given decent housing in the homesteads of the village and the hamlet, and had to live in outlying winter cabins and bath huts. Further harrassment was ahead, as "unknown thieves" stole cossack Timofei Serebrianikov's merchandise, linen cloth, from one of the barges. As usual, the cossacks did not hesitate to make use of their right to conduct minor customs-exempt trade. Yet this right could not protect them from local envy when Panikadilshchikov shrugged off their demands to investigate the theft. Meanwhile, they incurred even greater expenses, for they had to hire a barge with their own money to cross lake Baikal when the weather turned more amiable. Back in Irkutsk, they demanded an investigation to be conducted about the behaviour of the *prikazchiki*.[771]

As no report on any subsequent investigation has survived, this petition may contain twisted facts or straightforward forgery; but what remains of this story in any case is the brisk enmity of some rank-and-file Irkutsk cossacks, without any record of unusual wealth, sent to deliver supplies to Transbaikal towns for two *prikazchiki*. The two *prikazchiki* continued to be leaders in their own right. Panikadilshchikov was a humble *desiatnik*, who was to be one of the focal figures of the campaign against Irkutsk and voevoda Savelov in 1696; he was among the so-called radicals during the rebellion. He was also one of the first cossacks at Selenginsk. In 1672,

[771] RGADA f.1121 op.1 no.68, l.22 (petition)

when he was first mentioned, another act of bitter competition between fortresses was recorded – at his instigation, Selenginsk cossacks, instead of finding new *iasak* payers, "persuaded" Buryats to deliver *iasak* at Selenginsk, and not at the more northerly, defenceless Barguzinsk – cossacks were not allowed to live there year-round, to prevent the introduction of agriculture in its rich hunting grounds.[772] In complete contrast to the conventional image of the rebels as poor recent recruits, he was also in that year already owner of a *kabala* worth fifty roubles, while his business required him to repay his own debts.[773] Already in 1683 he was a *prikazchik* who usually had to bribe the voevoda for an assignment; he appears an unlikely candidate for the leadership of impoverished radicals. As will be discussed below, the other enemy of the suppliers from Irkutsk, the *syn boiarskii* Ivan Novikov, was twice elected *prikazchik* by the rebels: once in Il'insk as candidate of the "radicals", as Aleksandrov calls them on the grounds that they were newly recruited and allegedly followed a more extreme tactic, while adhering to the same aim of "democracy", and for the second time at Udinsk in September 1697, where he was a key figure among the upper stratum of cossacks supposedly dismantling the rebellion.[774]

Novikov's case is a very good example of the political structures of the Baikal region. He was on voevoda Savelov's payroll, receiving excess salary in 1693-6, which he had to pay back after Savelov was relieved.[775] In 1695, while rebellion was already organised in Selenginsk, he was *prikazchik* in Kaban'sk, a small fortress not far from the mouth of the Selenga. In 1698/1699, during the investigation of claims of administrative misdemeanours raised against him by a Kabansk cossack, he stated that he was made *prikazchik* in 1695 "with the help of Grigorii Turchaninov", the mighty *prikazchik* of Il'insk who in turn was, apart from the voevoda, the most prominent object of the rebels' wrath.[776] As owner of a mill at Il'insk, Novikov was also one of the wealthier *deti boiarskie* on the Selenga. Perhaps one of the reasons he was so successful in winning cossack support during the rebellion was his generous

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[772] Ibid. no.2, ll.22-23
[773] Ibid., l.6
[774] Aleksandrov, *Vlast'*, 308, 310, 325. See also below.
[775] RGADA f.1121 op.2 no.146, l.3 (receipt book)
[776] Ibid. op.1 no.429, l.22

offer to grind their grain without taking fees in his mill. After the rebellion had ceased, he could not, however, win compensation from Irkutsk or Moscow for the credit he had thus offered.[777] After the rebellion, he also faced other investigations, in part reopened cases which had been dormant during the years of rebellion. At the onset of the rebellion, he became involved in the investigation concerning Turchaninov's encouragement of the illegal distillation of alcohol, which had been appointed by the voevoda Savelov. Novikov was accused of the same practices as Turchaninov by the cossacks Ivan Chiuzhanin and Ivan Rozgildeev – both from Selenginsk – in their petition signed and handed in at Irkutsk in 1696. While a minor perpetrator was apprehended and interrogated, the same did not happen to Novikov, as he was among those warned in advance; it is not clear in this source who tipped them off.[778] As will be shown below, sympathies in the voevoda's office allow for the possibility that a partisan of the rebels warned Novikov. Novikov and Panikadilshchikov were not the main leaders of the revolt in 1696, but they played very important roles. Yet they were hardly part of a radical movement to drive the voevodas out of Siberia and establish a premeditated cossack "republic", a "Don" not accepting any authority above them. Rather, they acted according to the demands of the moment, trying to mobilise support which could be found at least in times of rebellion only – see chapter I – when subordinating themselves to aims agreeable to the *Personenverband*, which they embodied even more than their supporters, or by securing or promising tangible material advantages.

In the Transbaikal, a number of issues brushed over by earlier accounts of the Transbaikalian rebellion had aggravated older tensions between the rising dominance of Irkutsk and the Transbaikal. Situated on opposite banks of the southern tip of lake Baikal were Udinsk and Selenginsk on the major tributary from the southern Mongol steppe, and Irkutsk on the only outlet to the north and west; the latter was much more in a position to profit from supplies towed on the Angara from Eniseisk or, increasingly, grown around Irkutsk itself. Irkutsk was founded in 1661 as an *ostrog*. In 1666, Selenginsk was established by local initiative, and was registered as a town (*gorod*) already in 1683. Irkutsk, however, in 1684 had developed into a key centre

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[777] Ibid. no.407, ll.1-16; no.452, ll.1-8 (1699)
[778] Ibid. no.420, ll.41-3

with its own voevoda, a full range of administrative buildings, warehouses, baths, a merchants' hall, cottages for the cossacks and other inhabitants, a guard house and a church. In 1686, Irkutsk was elevated to the status of a town and Selenginsk, which was situated 400 kilometres further to the southeast and very close to the open steppe, was made part of the Irkutsk *prisud*. There was an inner bailey in Irkutsk and a citadel, fortified like the inner bailey, but containing a larger number of buildings. Beyond this was a third fortified settlement, irregular in shape in contrast to the other two. It contained craft workshops, shops and counting houses for the commercial, cossack and artisan communities.[779] In 1697, nearly all of the 269 peasants of Irkutsk *prisud* lived in the main town or in the villages and hamlets around it. They also grew the supplies for Nerchinsk and Iakutsk. Spafarii noted Irkutsk's favourable location already in 1675:

> "...the fortress Irkutsk is located on the left bank of the river Angara on a plain site. The fortress is built very well,...and the area is very suitable for agriculture"[780]

Selenginsk and the Transbaikal as a whole, however, were in a doubly disadvantaged position, in particular because, after the treaty of Nerchinsk with China, Nerchinsk cossacks monopolised the Chinese trade – beyond the state monopoly exercised and exploited by Moscow merchants. At the end of the century, Iakutsk on the river Lena in the northeast boasted the major remaining fur resources in Siberia. Nerchinsk, which was not subordinated to the Irkutsk voevodas, was prosperous enough to buy grain to supply its garrisons; already in 1690 it was capable of paying cossack salaries without arrears. [781] The western Transbaikal, as opposed to Nerchinsk and Dauria, was just a poor steppe forepost, where, despite the southerly climate, for a long time nothing much was grown except for some vegetables in gardens in the close vicinity of the fortress. There was nearly no *posad* in Selenginsk either, a condition unchanged even in the first decades of the eighteenth century. The reason was Mongol raids, against which the Selenginsk area was particularly hard to defend.[782] A special envoy of the Mongol Tsetsen-Khan

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[779] Collins, "Subjugation", 39; Kudriavtsev, *Irkutsk*, 6-29; Vasil'ev, *Zabaikal'skie*, 120-1; Spafarii, *Puteshestvie*, 192

[780] Spafarii, N., *Puteshestvie*, 115

[781] Leont'eva, *Sluzhilye*, 295; Aleksandrov, V.A., *Russkoe naselenie Sibiri*, Moscow 1964, 261

[782] Spafarii, *Puteshestvie*, 163

stated the difficult position of Selenginsk already a year after its foundation, when he arrived at Moscow to mark claims to the site and the region. Even in the 1690s, Selenginsk was not safe from Mongol raids. The Transbaikal was dependent on Irkutsk, but had little to offer, as *iasak* was of marginal significance.

Udinsk was erected first in 1641[783] but remained a minor outpost until it was re-erected on Golovin's orders on a well-fortified hill above the Selenga. A strategic point half surrounded by mountains, it was without any peasants, *posad*, or *iasak* people. While local revenue bottomed out at four roubles twenty kopeks, irregular (*neokladnye*) expenditure amounted already to more than thirty roubles annually. Since the caravans took the route of the river Uda in the 1690s, it was a station of marginal importance and little local produce to offer except for horses and cattle. When the Nerchinsk treaty was signed, most of the Khorinsk *iasak*-paying Buryats under Nerchinsk administration lived on the Uda, Khilka and Selenga rivers, which lay close to Udinsk. This inclined Golovin to re-assign most of them to Udinsk and grant the settlement town status in 1690. The town of Selenginsk was registered as a mere *ostrog* in the new Udinsk *uezd*; Kabanskii *ostrog* and Il'insk *sloboda*, in which a small garrison was later stationed – thus becoming an *ostrog* – were also part of this new district. In turn, Golovin subordinated them all to the Irkutsk *prisud*.[784] Udinsk was therefore an ideal candidate for a *Personenverband* operating in isolation and independently, in what can be identified as very close to the original cossack fashion.

Selenginsk, on the other hand, had been an early contender for trade with China. It enjoyed the advantages of the Selenga, and drew on the experiences of the oldest Russian settlement south of Lake Baikal. In contrast to Udinsk, Selenginsk also held claims to fertile soils immediately south of the lake. The Selenga valley has some moderately fertile soils, but even in the end of the twentieth century the dry climate – the southern shore of the Baikal enjoys 2,400 to 2,700 hours of sunshine annually – yields low harvests and has led to preserve the predominance of cattle-raising.[785]

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[783] Huttenbach, "Penetration", 89

[784] Vasil'ev, *Zabaikal'skie*, t.I, 212. In this thesis, "Udinsk" always means Verkhneudinsk; since the revolution it has become the capital of Buryatia, Ulan-Ude.

[785] Wein, *Sibirien*, 18, 209

Already in 1668 *syn boiarskii* Ivan M. Perfil'ev, still living in Tara in Western Siberia, reported on his journey to Beijing that:

> "[Selenginsk] is the best fortress in Siberia, since the climate is warm, and promises rich harvests; even Chinese cucumbers grow in the gardens. A huge market could be established since China is very close. There are many nomads around who want to establish trade in horses, dromedaries, cattle and...Chinese products, but...there are few Russians... Eniseisk *syn boiarskii* Ivan Porshennikov, the merchant Gavrilo Romanov and forty-three Selenginsk cossacks rode...to China through Mongolia [in 1675]"[786]

Milescu met them in the same year at Eniseisk, but their business had been "very unprofitable, owing to [an internal Chinese] war."[787] Nevertheless, he echoed Perfil'ev's observations on Selenginsk. In 1659 Perfil'ev had been sent with the Bukharan merchant Ablin as a messenger to Beijing, carrying Aleksei Mikhailov's letter to the Chinese emperor, which reflected the new approach Moscow had adopted: Rather than trying to establish diplomatic relations, which were hampered by mutual sensitivities, the tsar asked only for trade relations. Perfil'ev, who also played a major role during the 1696 rebellion, was received favourably and his mission met with success. It was no accident that the *syn boiarskii*, who was an experienced merchant and thriving cossack leader, settled in Irkutsk.[788]

Cossack salaries at Selenginsk and elsewhere depended on trade. Already in the mid-1680s Chinese luxury wares surrendered to customs in place of the toll appeared as elements in salary payments. The Selenga benefited from conflict between Russia and China – in 1687/1688, at the peak of the war on the Amur, customs tithes collected from Chinese goods at Selenginsk and Udinsk totalled 1,361 roubles, indicating at least ten times that amount in value was on hand on the local markets.[789] After the peace treaty was signed, owing to continuing insecurity on the Mongol steppe, Nerchinsk drained this source of income and thrived on it – in 1687/1688 Nerchinsk customs tolls amounted to just 1,461 roubles, in 1689 1,148 roubles, but from 1694-1697 they had already risen to 26,983 roubles, and from 1698-1702 as high as 105,908 roubles. After 1703, when a Dzhungar nomad confederation

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[786] Spafarii, *Puteshestvie*, 127-8
[787] Mancall, *China*, 349 n.18
[788] Ibid., 54-56; Spafarii, *Puteshestvie*, 21; Leont'eva, *Sluzhilye*, 297
[789] Mancall, *China*, 349 n.19

campaign against the Manchu Chinese was defeated, the way through the Mongolian steppe was cleared and caravans changed to the shorter route through the Selenga valley and the Mongolian steppe; consequently toll revenue at Nerchinsk dropped to virtually nothing.[790] In Nerchinsk, mining made up for a sizable part of this loss, but Selenginsk and the western Transbaikal were left without any additional source of income between 1689 and 1703.

As far as defence and military personnel was concerned, the Transbaikal garrisons, which were assigned an important role during conflict with China in securing supply lines from Mongol interference, were further strengthened after the treaty of Nerchinsk. Yet this endeavour proved anything but straightforward. Western Siberian cossacks, proud of their service record and accustomed to voicing their opinion, did not comply easily with provisions concerning their future made without their consent. Golovin first attempted to assign cossacks sent from Western Siberia for eternal service in Udinsk, but since *vybori* had been signed in their home garrisons documenting and guaranteeing that they had to serve for a defined number of years, too many of them fled. According to one contemporary calculation, out of 740 cossacks whose assignment was changed to eternal service at Udinsk, 296 men were married and owned a house in "Siberia" (i.e. Western Siberia), while 218 left their aged parents behind.[791] While Leont'eva stresses Golovin's use of economic stimuli to induce cossacks to stay at Udinsk, the actual policies applied were more mixed. At first, the Siberian chancellery hoped for the "volunteers"

> "from various ranks who arrived by their own initiative, or swapped with musketeers mounted or on foot."

Golovin supported this view in a report dated 28 January 1691: "Among the servitors who were enlisted" at Tobol'sk, Tiumen', Tomsk, Narym,

> "those who voluntarily stay may do so. Many of them will stay, since some have set up houses and married…give them a small aid from the treasury to build houses."[792]

The chancellery, answering to these pressures, cut the Udinsk garrison by half:

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[790] Ibid., 349 n.16; Leont'eva, *Sluzhilye*, 117-8. Khodarkovsky, *Steppe*; *DAI*, vol.X, 369
[791] RGADA, f.214, stb. 1059, l.282 (report)
[792] Ibid., ll.290-292

"Cossacks who were elected from all ranks...and who were left in Udinsk shall be divided in two halves... Leave the first half of 376 men at Udinsk for defence, and release the other half to go to the Siberian towns, whence they were elected."[793]

While, in Central Russia, *vybori* were an institution of collective responsibility – members of the *posad* elected customs officers, thereby pledging to pay any irregularities[794] – during the expansion into Siberia they also acquired the function of backing *Personenverbände* who confronted the demands of the chancellery and the tsar.

Initially, Golovin's policy proved successful: In 1691 Udinsk first sent so-called *godovalshchiki* to Selenginsk to serve there for a year, while Selenginsk in turn stopped to dispatch its own *godovalshchiki* to Udinsk.[795] Golovin left 150 *strel'tsy* and fifty mounted cossacks in recently re-erected Udinsk. They were called "*polkovye*" musketeers, as they had been levied from volunteer cossack sons and young cossacks.[796] After Golovin's reform, the Selenginsk garrison comprised 150 cossacks, twenty more than before the war, of which two units of fifty were mounted, and one served on foot. Of these two or three *desiatki* were sent each year to Barguzinsk and Kaban'sk. In 1694 in addition to these cossacks thirty-two male kin of cossacks and three retired cossacks lived in Selenginsk.[797]

In 1693, however, another reinforcement was sent, but this time there was no opportunity to win service merits, booty or land, and there were no volunteers available. Forcibly sent under orders, among the 125 cossacks from Tobol'sk, Tiumen', Tomsk, Berezov and Pelym there were actually many outlaws and vagrants. On their way to the Transbaikal, lacking sufficient supplies, they raided towns and fortresses as they could. One hundred of them were sent to Nerchinsk, in a benign setting, where they staged nothing comparable to the Selenga rebellion during the mid-1690s. Twenty-five remained in Udinsk, in quite pitiful conditions, and with little prospects of improving their conditions.[798] Another 340 recruits from Western

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[793] Leont'eva, *Sluzhilye*, 67-8; RGADA, f.214, st.855, l.86 (decree)

[794] Dewey, Horace "From the Kinship Group to Every Man His Brother's Keeper", *JBGO* vol.30.3 (1982), 321-35

[795] Leont'eva, *Sluzhilye*, 69-70

[796] Macura, P., *Elsevier's Russian-English Dictionary*, Amsterdam 1990, pt.III, entry "polk". See chapt.I. On the use of "musketeer" and "cossack", see pp.8, 30.

[797] Vasil'ev, *Zabaikal'skie*, vol.I, 212

[798] Ibid., 217

Siberia were sent to Udinsk in 1694; of these, 325 arrived.[799] Rather than a consolidated upper layer of rich cossacks and *deti boiarskie* on the one hand, and poor, but united rank-and-file cossacks on the other, as Siberian cossacks are often described, the picture thus presented on the Selenga is a mosaic consisting of men with altogether different backgrounds. The effects of war, imperial expansion and arbitrary rule had severely socially dislocated some of them – the "newly-recruited". Nevertheless, in their opposition and envy towards Irkutsk, virtually all cossacks on the Selenga were united, although with varying degrees of intensity.

It is thus not surprising to find an ordinary mounted Irkutsk cossack embroiled in a dishonour suit against a former Udinsk rebel leader. On February 9th 1700 L. Korchazhenskii accused the Udinsk *piatidesiatnik* of mounted cossacks Ivan Ivanov *syn* Oshurkov, formerly a staunch ally of elected *prikazchik* Borisov, for the disgrace he had suffered in the bazaar. Korchazhenskii claimed that the reason was a loan of thirty-three roubles he was meant to pay back, but Oshurkov also made reference to the wider differences between Irkutsk and Udinsk:

> "He called me [Korchazhenskii] a traitor…and said: 'I am going to cut your hands off for your traitorous letter and torture you!' – without your, sovereign, decree, although I have not perpetrated anything."

Although Oshurkov repeated his allegations before the voevoda, Korchazhenskii brushed it away by reference to his recent election as a *iasak* collector:

> "…if there had been any treasonable affair I…would not have been assigned and elected to your great sovereign's affairs and now…I am chosen…according to your…sovereign's decree and according to the election of Irkutsk cossacks for your…sovereign's sable *iasak* collection and the document…is registered in Irkutsk voevoda's office. Thus Ivan denounces me falsely and dishonours me."[800]

Honour had direct repercussions on social rank[801], on appointments to profitable service journeys, and the support of the *Personenverband* elevated an ordinary cossack well over an apparently unaware Udinsk *piatidesiatnik*. Although it was registered and protected by the local chancellery, its point of reference, its basis was not in the official organs, but rather in the limited public sphere of the cossacks.[802]

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[799] Leont'eva, *Sluzhilye*, 68
[800] RGADA f.1121 op.1 no.145, l.37 (petition)
[801] Kollman, *Honor*, 121-9
[802] On the limited public sphere, see 141, 253, 278.

The pre-history of the conflict between Korchazhenskoi and Oshurkov, which occurred during the final enquiry into the Selenga rebellion, will be investigated in this chapter.

Competition and envy between cossacks of different towns in the Irkutsk *prisud* was exacerbated by the fact that Irkutsk cossacks – and those living in the valley of the Angara – were the main suppliers of grain to caravans and the Nerchinsk administration as well as by individual cossacks. Grain was supplied not merely by wealthy *deti boiarskie* and rich cossacks, but many cossack owners of smallholdings also sold their spare produce in the market or to purveyors.[803] If the Selenga cossacks asked for their salary, there was no profit in it for their comrades on the opposite side of the lake. Since the *prisud* fell under the Irkutsk voevoda's responsibility, grain was not bought but taxes raised. Unsurprisingly, when they marched to Irkutsk to claim their salary, the disgruntled Transbaikalian veterans of the battles for the Amur stated that not just the voevoda – who had not been in Siberia in 1689 – but Irkutsk inhabitants in general were traitors. Accordingly, in the Nerchinsk treaty of that year, they "left three towns in the hands of the Chinese emperor."[804] Such were the resentments of uprooted, socially dislocated men, conflicts that were at the root of events analysed in this chapter.

While Irkutsk enjoyed reliability in the supply of grain salary due to its homegrown supplies, the Selenga fared much worse. Although grain was sent on a regular basis, quantities did not always live up to expectations. Nevertheless, in most cases this did not cause social disorder. Thus in 1681, Selenginsk cossacks were short of 449.5 quarters of rye and 444.5 quarters of barley. The following year, they received their full allowance, but no compensation for earlier losses. Arrears were lower before the rebellion – in 1693 Irkutsk sent 400 quarters of rye to Selenginsk and 1,597.25 quarters to Udinsk, while the settlements on the lower Selenga contributed another 165 quarters of rye. Yet this did not mean that Selenginsk was short of rye and oats, as has been claimed; the reason why 328 quarters of rye were not paid out was that some cossacks did not petition to Irkutsk, or had been sent on distant service. Udinsk, the frontier town with a large resident garrison, was

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[803] Leont'eva, *Sluzhilye*, 295; Aleksandrov, *Naselenie*, 261
[804] Aleksandrov, *Vlast'*, 315

relatively well supplied with arrears of only 14 quarters of rye and 40 quarters of oats. In 1696, this relation looked worse, as Selenginsk, Il'insk and Kaban'sk asserted they had received only 233 quarters, while Udinsk was stripped of all but 60 quarters of rye.[805]

Hasty conclusions as to the motives of the rebels drawn from these isolated facts nevertheless conceal more than they can illuminate.[806] For the year 1689/1690 we are in the fortunate possession of full records of the calculations and negotiations between Selenginsk cossacks and the Irkutsk voevoda administration concerning cash reimbursement. 167 men were entitled to receive 910 roubles. In August 1690, when Selenginsk cossacks petitioned at Irkutsk for their salary for the following year, the amount of Selenginsk revenue, *iasak* and customs tolls came to a meagre 266 roubles. Although the cossacks could refer to an impressive chain of precedences when they had received the full allowance in the past, all they accomplished at Irkutsk was that this Selenginsk "sovereign's treasury" was redirected to meet the demands of cossacks, who received another 192 roubles on top of the 60 roubles already distributed.[807] An entry under the year 1692/1693 also attests to the precedent of lending grain on the part of Irkutsk Voznesenskii monastery to cover arrears in 1691/1692 which were paid back one year later by the voevoda's office.[808]

Sedentarisation and Rebellion

Thus payments of salary depended on military performance and the revenues a garrison yielded. The Selenga was disadvantaged in the first half of the 1690s, but the Transbaikalian cossacks did not grudgingly wait to be fed. Like others in their situation, they sought to increase the area under cultivation. By the early 1690s, encouraged by the Siberian chancellery, they had made a huge effort to plough and sow the Kudarinsk steppe, an area close to the edge of lake Baikal, just north of the Selenga, which was guarded by mountains. This area was warm during summer,

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[805] RGADA f.1121 op.2 no.156, ll.1-2 (petitions); RGADA f.214 kn.768, l.236; kn.1034, ll.236-248; st.1141, ll.26-42 (excerpts, receipts); st.1424, l.80 (petition). Leont'eva omits deliveries in 1692/1693 to Selenginsk from the lower Selenga and the reasons for arrears.

[806] Leont'eva, *Sluzhilye*, 135

[807] RGADA f.1121 op.2 no.130, ll.2-7 (excerpt, decision)

[808] RGADA f.214 st.1034, l.243 (excerpt

fertile and suitable for growing grain.[809] In their settlements, Selenginsk cossacks became increasingly self-sufficient although Selenginsk reached the level of subsistence only in 1700, and even then this condition could not be maintained in 1705 and 1710. Only the small *ostrogi* Il'insk and Kabansk could offer significant surpluses in the early 1690s.[810]

While more cossacks moved to the outlying hamlets, tensions between the Buryats and the cossacks increased. As in most cases, when fertile steppe lands were opened up to agriculture, these were not "virgin" lands as peasants might think for the Itantsynsk Buryats claimed them as their ancestral pastures. Some historians have stressed cooperation between the rebels and the Buryats, conjuring up a vision of harmony between the nomads and rank-and-file cossacks that could only be disturbed by lofty *prikazchiki* like the *syn boiarskii* Grigorii Turchaninov. Yet as mentioned before, Turchaninov had started as an ordinary cossack, and his relations to the Transbaikalian cossacks were much more complex than such accounts allow. The petition of the Itantsynsk Buryats leaves no doubt about the true reasons of their collective manifestation, riding into Il'insk on the day of Turchaninov's arrest. This action was not a sign of sympathy for the rebels, but a protest against the links between the rebels and the former *prikazchik*. Thus the Buryats wrote in August 1696, five months after these incidents:

> "In recent years in [our]...grazing grounds along the Selenga the Selenginsk cossacks...[have settled]. [They] have caused great oppression: They take excess fees for grazing and surfeit fines for murder. The *prikazchik* Grishka Turchaninov and comrades put [us] in fetters in the forts and small settlements and torture [us] excessively without investigation. They do not release [us] to find [our] rights with the *prikaznye* of Itantsynsk. Their oppression and forcefulness has destroyed [us] and [we] cannot graze in the distant steppe since the Mongols rob [our] herds."[811]

Again, they stressed the connection of Turchaninov and Selenginsk cossacks in the final sentences of the petition that demanded redress for their grievances, reaching back to the early 1690s:

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[809] Spafarii, *Puteshestvie*, 126
[810] Leont'eva, *Sluzhilye*, 136
[811] RGADA f.1121 op.1 no.374, l.6 (petition)

"[Sovereign]..., order the investigation of these offences and the oppression that we have suffered from the Selenginskans and *prikaznye*.... The *prikazchiki* of Irkutsk *prisud* shall not judge our court-cases."[812]

Turchaninov was a willing ally in the fight for the Kudarinsk steppe, on whom Selenginsk cossacks could rely. Already in 1691/2 the Siberian chancellery had given orders, answering the Buryats' first petition:

"...in future appoint Grishka Turchaninov and comrades neither as *prikazchik* or to the *iasak* collection nor to any other position at Udinsk, Verkholensk, Balagansk and in...the *iasak*-paying districts. He should not be released or sent anywhere."[813]

This order, however, was to no avail – it was never enacted by voevoda Gagarin.

For several years, up to 1695, this cooperation between Turchaninov and the Selenginsk cossacks thrived. Turchaninov's credit in the eyes of the cossacks depended, however, on their position vis-à-vis the Itantsynsk Buryats. By the middle of the decade, Selenginsk cossacks settling on the Kudarinsk steppe faced increasing problems. The Buryats decided that only aggression, however desperate in the long run, held any prospects of restoring their rights to the pastures. Itantsynsk Buryats remained under Nerchinsk jurisdiction in 1690 when Golovin assigned the *iasak*-paying Buryats of the Selenga area to Udinsk, perhaps because there was little opportunity to collect *iasak* among the Itantsynsk Buryats.[814] They relied on the Nerchinsk *prikazchiki*, who gained nothing from allowing the settlers into their territory, giving shelter to the Buryats while harassing the settlers. The cossacks expressed indignation at this collusion and referred to a decree allowing them to settle in the Kuda steppe, since they could not accept the right of the nomads to use their ancestral pastures:

"We complain...about the *iasak*-paying Buryats of Nerchinsk *prisud*. They graze their...herds in the Kudarinsk steppe. We cossacks have set up our houses [there] to grow grain for your sovereign's grain salary according to [your] decree and to the allotment of these places in our possession. We have fenced in our plots with good fences, which the Buryats destroy arbitrarily and mischievously and then let their copious herds graze on the fields."

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[812] Ibid.
[813] Ibid. no.88, l.102 (decree)
[814] Vasil'ev, *Zabaikalskie,* vol.1, 212

The Buryats, they claimed, stole from their farms and beat them on the fields "within an inch of our lives".

> "However, the *prikazchiki*, interpreters and cossacks of the Nerchinsk *prisud* at Itantsynsk do not judge these our…petitions and our indictments, and have not addressed our destruction. They evade court procedure, investigation and even public announcements…in cases concerning these Buryats because of their greediness."

They added that the Nerchinsk cossacks destroyed them with their "impertinent treachery", although there were not even fur-bearing animals the *iasak*-payers could hunt.[815]

In September 1696/1697, answering further Buryat complaints, the Siberian chancellery announced a penalty to be paid by any future voevoda who did not comply with the rule that Itantsynsk Buryats were to remain under Nerchinsk administration.[816] Later, in 1696/1697 in their petition demanding aid for their bad loans, Selenginsk, Kabansk and Il'insk cossacks of all ranks and backgrounds, irrespective of any intermediary opposition during the rising, explained away losses caused by this conflict, asserting the lower Selenga had suffered a major "bad harvest".[817]

The conflict and the increasing helplessness of Selenginsk cossacks and their *prikazchik* marked a turning point in the pre-history of the rebellion – Selenginsk cossacks were alienated from Irkutsk and Nerchinsk, and they also valued Turchaninov less than before. By now, they had other concerns and pressing needs, and they found allies to pursue their new aims. In this situation, and for some, the way was free to get even. Udinsk cossacks were ready to cooperate with Selenginsk, since they were eager to get hold of Turchaninov. The new constellation in the Transbaikal meant trouble for the two men who represented power in Irkutsk prisud. Selenginsk cossacks living in the hamlets of the Kudarinsk steppe were among those who took the lead in rebellion: Among twenty-five cossacks who signed the aforementioned petition against the Buryats and the *prikazchik* of the *zimov'e* there were at least ten active rebels and petitioners against voevoda Savelov and Turchaninov. Four of the signatories, the *desiatnik* Anton Berezovskii, the

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[815] RGADA f.214 st.1424, ll.123-4 (petition)
[816] RGADA f.1121 op.1 no.88, ll.99-105 (rescript)
[817] Ibid. op.2 no.156, ll.1-2 (petition)

piatidesiatnik Dmitrii Tarakanovskii and the *deti boiarskie* Petr Arsen'ev and Stepan Kazan' were the leaders of the rebels in Selenginsk.[818] Thus one of the reasons for the rebellion was a classic example of steppe frontier settlers disturbed in their recently-established, fragile relationship to agriculture. In many cases, throughout the slow-moving history of sedentarisation, whether it was Crimean or Kazan' Tatars or cossacks, they sought relief in raids on other settlements or merchants from hardships induced by unstable climate or destruction of their harvest by nomads.[819]

A Shaky Alliance on the Selenga

Preparations for rebellion started with the first letter calling on the cossacks in all fortresses on the Selenga and those living in the hamlets to come to Il'insk in late 1695. One of the three signatories was Ivan Novikov, the *prikazchik* mentioned above, who lived in a hamlet.[820] It befits the area of the estuary of river Selenga, with its established mercantile interests, that another signatory who also lived in Kudarinsk steppe, *piatidesiatnik* Vasilii Anofriev syn Vesnin, was a merchant: The fifth paid for his saltworks at Selenginsk was 50 *pud* in 1694, rising to 280 *pud* in 1704. Already in 1695 he had lent 200 *pud* of salt to the voevoda. Apparently he had made a fortune earlier, when he contracted to buy and transport 1,890 *pud* grain for Golovin's army at Nerchinsk in 1687, out of a total of 3,000 required.[821]

Selenginsk cossacks also intercepted voevoda Savelov's barges carrying his caravan to China at Posol'skii Mys, the estuary of the Selenga. In February 1696 a delegation was sent from Selenginsk to the voevoda to demand the full salary in advance for the year 1696/1697, that is, including August of the following year. Senka Krasnoiar and Petr Arsen'ev returned with half-empty hands, or so cossacks on the Selenga deemed, for they received only the salary for the year 1695/1696, which had not yet been paid fully.[822] Savelov was not at all ready to give them a loan of one and a half years' salary in advance, and as events will show, most of Irkutsk cossacks firmly acceded to this notion. For cossacks on the southern side of the lake,

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[818] RGADA f.214 st.1424, ll.79-80, 122, 124 (petitions)
[819] Ostrowski, *Mongols*, 53
[820] Aleksandrov, "Materialy", 351 (letter). RGADA f.1121 op.1 no.468, l.26 (investigation)
[821] Leont'eva, *Sluzhilye*, 277; *Istoriia Sibiri*, vol.II, 91; Aleksandrov, *Dal'nevostochnykh*, 152
[822] Aleksandrov, "Materialy", 352 (investigation); Aleksandrov, *Vlast'*, 307; RGADA f.1121 op.1 no.377, l.26 (petition)

it must be said, the preceding years had shown that Savelov was unreliable; they claimed that the former voevoda, Gagarin, had paid out their full salary for one year in advance, but now they demanded even more than that. After all, some might recollect, Gavril Lovtsov, already retired in 1696, had received three years worth of salary in advance in 1667.[823] Although this was not an entirely isolated incident over the years, recent developments had indicated an altogether different situation – as the collected *iasak* fell even below subsistence, the Siberian chancellery allowed Selenginsk cossacks to distribute the *iasak* treasury in place of salary.[824]

When their attempt at negotiating their salary failed for the most part, Selenginsk cossacks put a premeditated plan into action. Petr Arsen'ev and Selenginsk *piatidesiatniki* Anton Berezovskii and Leont'ei Chiuzhakin and two *desiatniki* sent a letter to Udinsk calling for the conclusion of a treaty "for a good undertaking (*dlia dobrogo dela*)".[825] The treaty (*dogovor*) was not a call to abolish tsarist rule, but for rebellion in a more restricted sense. On a broad base of signatures from both towns, it was derived from the oath cossacks signed when they contracted for service.[826] This remarkable document proves the exact opposite of what some historians have read into the Selenga-rebellion – there is no sign of an attempt to chase the voevodas out of Siberia, but typical notions of the *Personenverband* are reiterated and confirmed. The Udinsk document started with a long list of names of *deti boiarskie*, *piatidesiatniki*, *desiatniki* and rank-and-file cossacks, in which all of them, except for the *syn boiarskii* Ivan Novikov and *ataman* Kornei Stroikov were listed as "old and newly-enlisted cossacks", irrespectibly of their rank, which was indicated further down the list. In a Muscovite – and Siberian – setting, which placed a huge emphasis on rank this is evidence of the perceived homogeneity of the *Personenverband*, while rank was not entirely forfeited by the treaty. All of them

> "beat their forehead to the Selenginsk *deti boiarskie*,...and rank-and-file",

pledging that

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[823] RGADA f.214 stb. 1697, ll.240-243 (excerpt); f.1121 op.1 no.377, ll.25-44 (petition); no.403, l.46 (investigation); Aleksandrov, *Vlast'*, 313; Vasil'ev, *Zabaikal'skie*, 121

[824] Leont'eva, *Sluzhilye*, 116

[825] Aleksandrov, "Materialy", 365 (letter); Aleksandrov, *Vlast'*, 307

[826] RGADA f.214 st.75, ll.4-19; f.1121 op.1 no.462, ll.2, 4, 6 and passim; op.2 no.41 (oaths)

"we have agreed to stand together as one peacefully (*poliubovno*), to observe good counsel among us, to serve the...sovereign by collecting the *iasak*, to obey each other in everything and to petition the...sovereign at Moscow about all our needs. Unnecessary enmity amongst us must be avoided."[827]

Institutionalisation of the *Personenverband* was sought in this document by reference to advice as described in the death bill of Ermak's cossacks (see chapter I, 60-2), as well as to the joint obligations in European Russian towns.[828] In spite of the treaty's overt attempt to limit opportunities for investigation, it reserved important roles for the tsar and the *nachal'nye liudi*, the officially-appointed as well as elected leaders, from the voevoda downwards. Considered far more dangerous than these men were internal divisions, "*smuty*" which the treaty attempted to ban by provisions for a mutual obligation to report every cossack who tried to sow distrust between Udinsk, Selenginsk, Il'insk and Kaban'sk to the "*nachal'nye ludi*". The Selenga treaty differed from a cossack's oath delivered while contracting for service in that it codified terms and obligations for the "leading men (*nachal'nye liudi*)", who were to be reported to the sovereign if they dared to cause any grievances, levy unnecessary taxes or cause destruction. To institutionalise these aims, the form of the Siberian cossack oath to the tsar was not chosen accidentally, since it was, by way of Ermak's cossacks and the death bill of Ermak and comrades, derived from the oaths sworn to each other by members of the southern European steppe cossack *Personenverband.* Formulas such as:

"not to open illegal dens, to pimp, to gamble, to steal and to beat others up."

were preserved and fitted well conditions on the Siberian frontier. In place of the group's disciplinary force, the tsar was formally assigned this power. Lantzeff, who also noted the prominence of these oaths, believed that the oath that was administered by the centre created an "*esprit de corps*" among the cossacks rather than treating it as an expression of forms of social organisation.[829] Yet institutionalisation opened up opportunities to both sides – the tsar, the chancellery and the cossacks remained within a common institutional culture, but they could take

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[827] Aleksandrov, "Materialy", 363-5

[828] Torke, *Staatsbedingte*, 87-9; Aleksandrov, *Vlast'*, 251, 276; Vvedenskii, A.A., "Klassovaia bor'ba i 'odinachestvo' v pomor'e v XVI-XVII vekakh", *VI* (1955) iss.5, pp. 116-123

[829] Lantzeff, *Siberia*, 76

advantage of the provisions made in these documents only according to the actual distribution of power. Attempts at enforcing these provisions can be found in particular with regard to loans on salary, when individual cossacks fled from service, although the connection between service and salary is not explicit in the oaths:

> "In the year 1698/1699 [two cossacks] were sent to Irkutsk to transport the grain supplies [for Udinsk]. On their way back to Udinsk they fled with the *doshchanik*. I [*prikazchik* Andrei Beiton] received orders to recover the...salary from their guarantors. However, the perpetrators were recruited beyond the control of the Udinsk servitors of all ranks so that there are no guarantors and no documentation."[830]

In an age when bureaucratic and social relations were overstretched in Siberia, an overarching institutional culture, which allowed for the interpretation of institutions according to leitideas, was tantamount to the lowest common denominator between Moscow and the Pacific Ocean.[831] Thus the Selenga treaty followed the general provisions of the 1649 *Ulozhenie*, and claimed to adhere to the sovereign's service (the "*dobroe delo*"), while agreeing on the obligation to jointly overcome the pitfalls of investigation.[832] At the same time, however, it could rely on cossack institutions incorporated in the body of Muscovite procedures.

While the rebels sought to legitimate their actions in semi-official written documents like the treaty, they did not hesitate to make use of the power of the *Personenverband* during their actions. Especially in Udinsk, the *Personenverband* employed its own signs and rituals of power: those cossacks calling for meeting carried staffs. *Piatidesiatnik* Ivan Alemasov denied his part in these meetings when he described the call, yet there is still some truth in his account:

> "When [I]...started dinner in [my] winterhut in Udinsk with [my] comrades, the Udinsk musketeer Danilko Fyk and comrades – [I] do not remember who they were – appeared under the window, carrying a staff. [Fyk], the ringleader, called...Alemasov and comrades to the council on the riverbank. [I] asked Danilko: 'What kind of council do you hold and to what end?' Fyk answered: 'Go honourably to the council, Ivan, otherwise you go insulted!'"[833]

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[830] Müller, G.F., *Opisanie sibirskago tsarstva*, St. Petersburg 1787, 188; Ogloblin, *Obozrenie*, pt. III, 129; Lantzeff, *Siberia*, 76; RGADA f.1121 op.1 no.457, l.32 (report)

[831] On institutions and *leitideas*, see Introduction.

[832] Perrie, "Outlawry", 530; Skrynnikov, R.G., *Sibirskaia ekspeditsiia Ermaka*, Novosibirsk 1986, 135-7; Torke, *Staatsbedingte*, 86-8

[833] Aleksandrov, "Materialy", 356

As already mentioned, questions of honour were crucial for status and the chances to be assigned on service journeys. Thus, the cossacks left no doubt where power lay. They supported this claim by the emphasis placed on the staffs they carried as ritual signs of the power of the cossack group – they were called "*karshi*", as a hostile *piatidesiatnik* indignantly reported.[834] The term refers to the world of river navigation in which the cossacks lived – it signifies a tree with extensive roots washed from the shores, lurking beneath the surface of a river.[835] *Karshi* were attributed to the "rebellious *burlatuki*", the unmarried men who owned no house and worked as day labourers who were hired for the *doshchaniki*.[836] Ivan Alemasov, however, avoided the term "*karsha*" in his statement, for despite his later attempts to cover his role in the rebellion, he had followed the call more than once:

> "[I]...went with him to the riverbank, where there were over thirty Udinsk musketeers, the *piatidesiatnik* Borisov, Petrushka Kainov, Fyk – [I] do not remember the others. The old and well-to-do cossacks and [I] started to persuade Borisov and comrades to reconsider their plans for rebellion. [The cossacks] threatened and beat [us] with sticks... They killed the old cossack Il'ia Ivanov on that occasion, for he tried to persuade them to give up their villainous plans..."[837]

When Ivan Alemasov made this statement in 1699, he overstated his actual fear for his life as well as his attempts to curb the rebels' zeal. The old and the higher-ranking cossacks were also more exposed to government reprisals; some of them, such as Alemasov, could rely on their rank-and-file comrades' support. Nevertheless, the decisions of the cossack circle were absolute decrees, and whoever dared question them once they were agreed, or held to a minority position, was punished severely. In the sources related to the rebellion, whenever a collective entity of the rebels appears, a number of names are mentioned, never just one. They figure as the best-known leaders and heads of the respective *Personenverband*. Alemasov's declared inability to tell who and how many cossacks and *desiatki* were taking part – except for the few who were, for different reasons, offered up to investigation –

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[834] Ibid., 353

[835] *SRIa*, entry "*karsha*". On ritual and state-building, see Kertzer, D.I., "The Role of Ritual in State-Formation", in: E.R. Wolff (ed.), *Religious Regimes and State-Formation*, Albany 1991, 58-103, here 85-103

[836] RGADA f.214 st.1367, l.98 (investigation)

[837] Aleksandrov, "Materialy", 356 (investigation)

saved his own life and ensured that he could be accepted further as a leader in Udinsk. Even in 1699 and later, when the *Personenverband* could no longer show itself openly, it lost little of its former power for some time to come. Alemasov's self-serving stylisation in the midst of his supposedly peaceful, anonymous *artel'shchiki* also underlines how thoroughly the *Personenverband* moulded life in Udinsk. Rather than chasing away the *deti boiarskie and piatidesiatniki* – and even the wealthier ones –, the *Personenverband* sought to control and place onerous obligations on them, as the case of *syn boiarskii* Ivan Novikov's mill shows. Regardless of gloating remarks referring to Novikov's fate, even a relatively highly-placed man like Petr Aleksandrov *syn* Arsen'ev, who, despite being outlawed for his Old Believer sympathies was also a client of high-ranking nobles at court, did not stay away from the rebel *Personenverband* for long; rather he attempted to use it in his own interests. Spiteful towards the voevoda who had stolen his property worth 400 roubles, including the four books he owned[838], Arsen'ev led the rebels at Selenginsk during the early stages of the uprising, and he was embraced by the cossacks as an experienced leader, provider of vital information and patron. In a letter written at Irkutsk in 1697/1698, his brother Ivan mentioned the favourable changes indicated by the relieving voevoda of Nerchinsk, Samoil Fedorovich Nikolev

> "seek security from...our former patron (*milostivets)* and never forget by all means to knock your forehead to him"

The Arsen'ev family were also clients of the boyar Fedor Mikhailovich Rtishchev, an influential advisor to the late tsar Alekseı Mikhailovich and tutor of the heir Aleksei until 1669.[839]

Rtishchev opened Muscovy to Ukrainian scholars in 1649. In contrast to the paucity of sources in many other similar cases in early modern Russia, his clientele is an unusually fully-described patronage network. It is noteworthy that it included more than just kin, which was an essential but not exclusive feature.[840] While Arsen'ev's membership of the clientele may be explained by his leanings towards

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[838] RGADA f.1121 no.429 ll.44-6 (investigation)
[839] Ibid., 375, 347. Rtishchev's patron was Boris Morozov: Bushkovitch, *Peter*, 40-2
[840] See Dixon, Simon, *The Modernisation of Russia 1676-1825*, Cambridge 1999, 138; cf. LeDonne, "Ruling Families in the Russian Political Order", *CMRS*, vol.28.3-4 (1987), 233-322

Old Belief, which was promoted by Rtishchev, the network extended not only to ranks above his position, but also to cossacks ranking below him. Arsen'ev's exhortations to P. Ermolin not to join the Udinsk rebel *Personenverband* at a late stage addressed the client with a familiar "*Brat Petr Ermolin, zdravstvui, Petr Arsen'ev chelom b'et*". Friendship is otherwise largely missing from the Russian record of patronage linkages, at least in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In part this may be attributed to the lack of personal written sources such as letters or diaries; however, the power of the *Personenverband* in Siberia supplies an additional explanation, since a voice in the circle and information about decisions and moods in neighbouring towns was crucial in the gamble for power and influence. The *Personenverband* was officially recognised, albeit in a diluted form – all attempts at prohibiting "*krugi i bunty*" aimed at actual rebellions, and were never successful. It is therefore less surprising to find friendship as a resource of patronage in distant Siberia at such an early point, since letters were less likely to be immediately burnt. Kinship networks around lake Baikal, too, can more often be suspected than proven, since even in seemingly obvious cases relevant information – such as patronymics – is often missing – for example, in the cases of the Kazanovs in Nerchinsk, Irkutsk and Il'insk, the Evseevs in Irkutsk, Selenginsk, Nerchinsk and Tiumen' or the Leont'ev's in Irkutsk, Kabansk, Udinsk and Ilimsk. Still, the 1720 Selenginsk investigation into bribery has produced tangible evidence of the remaining influence of the *Personenverband* and of kinship links.[841]

The two leaders, Petr Arsen'ev, the Selenginsk *syn boiarskii*, who lived in his hamlet in the Kudarinsk steppe, and Novikov, who shared the lives of his Udinsk men, although he also owned a small settlement, provide good examples for the difference between the two towns. Selenginsk lived off trade while also starting to cultivate the steppe near the lake. Yet since Selenginsk was situated far to the south, on the very brink of the open steppe, Udinsk separated Selenginsk and its agricultural settlements. Since the trade route had taken a more easterly turn, Selenginsk cossack merchants also set up shop in Il'insk. At the same time Udinsk, on its protected, but isolated hilltop within sight of the open Mongol steppe, had to rely on supplies

[841] RGADA f.214 kn.619 ll.13-100 (investigation)

brought from far away. It is significant for the divided attitudes in the Transbaikal regarding voevodas and their representatives that Selenginsk cossacks aimed at trade relations between voevodas. Intercepting the voevoda's men and his merchandise at Posol'skii Mys, the estuary of the Selenga, in early March 1696 was a well-planned raid, which took plenty of organisational talent and information in advance. It is possible that *syn boiarskii* Ivan Arsen'ev at Irkutsk informed his brother Petr about the caravan, although there is no surviving proof; however, Petr was involved in decisionmaking at Selenginsk at this time.[842] Since the coup had to be planned in advance, there remains some doubt whether a *syn boiarskii*, who was not an intimate follower of Afonasii Savelov should have known in time.

There were other potential sources of information available to the Selenginsk cossacks at Irkutsk. The clerk of the voevoda's office Timofei Pezhemskii does not fit the pattern of a poor cossack in rebellion against the upper crust on both sides of the Baikal either, but his trial is fraught with sympathies expressed for both sides in the conflict. In 1693/1694 he won back his slave Akulina, a Mongolian woman. His brother-in-law Sofron Kashaev at the Selenga had refused to return her after the year Pezhemskii had agreed to allow her to work at his mother-in-law's homestead.[843]

Clerks were often beaten by rebels for their suspected greediness, but Pezhemskii, perhaps through his personal connections to the Selenga settlements, felt very different about them. On 4 May 1696, two months after the raid on Afonasii Savelov's caravan, he was apprehended as a traitor and banned to Iakutsk. Two cossacks testified against him. Evsei Evseev of Nerchinsk, who had declared furs several times at Irkutsk, and Ivan Bechevin, a ropemaker and spinner and hardly an exceedingly rich man, who left little compromising trace in the records. While the rebels were already on their way to Irkutsk, the witnesses claimed Pezhemskii had declared sympathy one night, bragging that he wanted to "thrust the voevoda's office [which was posted in front of the town walls; C.W.] into the river." Denying any involvement in the uprising, Pezhemskii was soon convicted when cossacks ordered to search his house found incriminating letters.[844] Pezhemskii and the Arsen'ev

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[842] Aleksandrov, *Vlast'*, 307
[843] RGADA f.1121 op.2 no.147, ll.1-3 (petition, decision)
[844] Ibid., op.1 no.88, ll.31-6 (investigation)

brothers testify to the dense network of unofficial connections between Selenginsk and Irkutsk, which existed despite competition between the two towns. These connections and sympathies were by no means restricted to ordinary or poor people without influence; some of the latter also fled with the rebels.[845] A few local merchants, like Gerasim Lyskovets, showed their sympathy with the rebels by leaving Irkutsk or sending their family to the Selenga, when the rebels' barges left.[846] Thus there were many ways news about the voevoda's caravan could travel to Selenginsk in time since private networks of information and support, not altogether different from those maintained by voevodas or *deti boiarskie*, were common among cossacks and merchants on lake Baikal and elsewhere in Siberia.

Afonasii Savelov's goods, taken at Posol'skii Mys, were sealed and brought to Selenginsk. In town, a cossack circle was convened by Petr Arsen'ev, and the *piatidesiatniki* Anton Berezovskii and Dmitrii Tarakanovskii.[847] Berezovskii, leader of the Selenginsk cossacks during the campaign to Irkutsk and soon-to-be elected *prikazchik*, was anything but an uprooted or lower-class cossack – apart from his support for the common stance against Itantsynsk Buryats implying he owned land, he had also lost three of his dependents in 1691, who were killed by Tungus when they fled from their master; Berezovskii was compensated with 150 horses and cattle.[848] The Tarakanovskiis ranked among the wealthiest and oldest clans of Selenginsk. Tarakanovskii's father, the merchant Andrei Fedorov *syn* had already stayed in Irkutsk in 1674, where he contracted and delivered one thousand *pud* of grain to Irkutsk in 1687.[849] His sons, Dmitrii, Filip and Grigorii entered cossack service; two of them continued their father's business with considerable success. Dmitrii was a well-known merchant in Nerchinsk and Selenginsk. He contracted rye in 1688/1689 and travelled with merchandise to China without a service assignment, providing a substitute for service at Selenginsk.[850] In 1692-1700 Grigorii regularly declared furs. Dmitrii and Filip were also among the settlers in the Kudarinsk steppe

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[845] Aleksandrov, *Vlast'*, 313
[846] RGADA f.1121 op.2 no.160, l.3 (investigation)
[847] Aleksandrov, *Vlast'*, 307
[848] RGADA f.214 st.1424, l.122 (petition); Leont'eva, *Sluzhilye*, 210
[849] RGADA f.1121 op.2 no.33 (oath); Aleksandrov, *Dal'nevostochnykh*, 152
[850] Leont'eva, *Sluzhilye*, 322, 336; RGADA f.1121 op.1 no.533 ll.1-8 (investigation); Shunkov, V.I., *Ocherki po istorii zemledeliia Sibiri (XVII vek)*, Moscow 1956, 332

who petitioned against the Itantsynsk Buryats.[851] Thus men who were comfortably off took seemingly radical measures.

The circle accused voevoda Afonasii Savelov of treason – a "sovereign's affair" – claiming he had sent weapons abroad, which was a particular grave offence under 1693 trade regulations forbidding any arms sales to the Dzhungars.[852] Witnesses cited "Don cossack customs" when describing how they divided the booty among the cossacks. Several cossacks who had acquired part of the loot before its official distribution were beaten ritually in the circle – every cossack had to hit them with *karshi* to make sure the unity of the *Personenverband* was preserved.[853] Booty was also divided among the cossacks of Udinsk and Il'insk. Selenginsk cossacks thus lived up to the implicit conditions of the treaty, to secure peace by considering booty as a common possession. Il'insk *piatidesiatnik* Ivan Iziurev and *desiatniki* Matfei Ivanov and Vasili Shemiakinskoi rode to Selenginsk to claim part of booty, which was divided among the cossacks: "two polar fox furs or corsac foxes for each, and others received one corsac for their losses of [salary], which they sold...at low prices", later claiming that they, too, had not received their grain salary that year.[854]

In aiming at competing in foreign trade, Selenginsk cossacks differed from their Udinsk comrades, who already in 1695 had defined as their principal aim the removal of Grigorii Turchaninov. His role as a patron for all those distilling liquor from grain on the eastern bank of the Baikal made them his sworn enemy. Their grievance was that they did "not receive enough grain to serve the sovereign", since Turchaninov appropriated it "to starve us". They had petitioned the recently-arrived voevoda Afonasii Timofeevich Savelov when he travelled through Irkutsk *prisud* in 1695, yet obtained nothing but punishment.[855] Yet the Udinsk cossacks' role in clamping down on illegal distilleries is overshadowed by inconsistencies in their own petition. Thus, among those who contributed to distilling was Udinsk *syn boiarskii* Ivan Novikov, who was soon assigned *prikazchik* in Il'insk – without a proper election – by Udinsk rebels after they had deposed Turchaninov. The other person

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[851] Mashanova, "Promyslo-torgovaia", 146; RGADA f.214 no.1424, l.122 (petition)
[852] Mancall, *China*, 175
[853] Aleksandrov, *Vlast'*, 307
[854] RGADA f.1121 op.1 no.467, ll.131-2 (investigation)
[855] Aleksandrov, "Materialy", 355; Aleksandrov, *Vlast'*, 306

who was not easily reconciled with a common rebellion directed against distilleries and injustice was Vasilii A. Vesnin, the co-initiator of the meeting at Il'insk. According to the report of Irkutsk cossacks who were sent to confiscate distillery equipment in early January 1696 he was among those warned in advance, covering up their traces.[856] Udinsk cossacks, rather than aiming at the general eradication of distilleries, intended to control them. This was underlined also by the report. It supported the voevoda, highlighting that it was due to the Selenga rebellion that Savelov could not summon those responsible for distilling activities. Yet it was Savelov who fell victim to an intrigue rather than the rebels who were cheated. The leader of the investigation, Irkutsk undersecretary Pezhemskii, as mentioned above, was soon afterwards apprehended as a clandestine supporter of the rebels in Irkutsk. The tacit agreement between the prospective rebels and the distillers was that Turchaninov was to be the culprit, while Udinsk seized real power in Il'insk, rather than the nominal subordination to Udinsk district Golovin had instituted. The alleged distiller and Selenginsk *syn boiarskii* Ivan Uvarov had signed the petition against the Itantsynsk Buryats, and gave his new enmity to Turchaninov additional vent by accusing him of taking sixty *podstavs* of Chinese silk at a price of six hundred roubles by force. Nevertheless, he was also among those who had been elevated to their rank by voevodas Savelov and Gagarin and who were put back on their old places during the subsequent investigation. On 15th April a delegation sent from Irkutsk headed by Ivan Perfil'ev to offer negotiations was turned back at Udinsk with the remark "we are going to live on our own." The rebels also threatened to dispatch cossacks to Irkutsk to incite the garrison to depose the voevoda.[857]

Confrontation was inevitable with the Il'insk cossacks, who took a different view of the situation at the Selenga. Tension was palpable already on 7th March 1696, when during the night *piatidesiatnik* Borisov with fifty Udinsk cossacks rode to the villages of Kolesnikov and Iugovoi, near Il'insk. Grigorii Turchaninov reported that several men, including a Buryat and a peasant from Iugovoi, had complained that Udinsk cossacks had robbed them of their horses "and they did not tell us for what

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[856] RGADA f.1121 op.1 no.420, ll.41-3 (report)

[857] RGADA f.214 st.1424, l.124 ob. (petition); f.1121 op.1 no.429, l.47 (investigation); no.451, l.163 (report). Aleksandrov, *Vlast'*, 311

reason or on what orders." Returning to Udinsk, they shot at the walls of Il'insk. Yet when Savelov later ordered an investigation, *syn boiarskii* Stepan Kazan' declared he could not investigate in Udinsk for he feared the retaliation of Borisov "and comrades"[858] even if he gathered twenty cossacks for support. He was not alone with his estimation, for all the petitioners and other witnesses soon refused to reiterate their statements – the Buryat Oneiko declared that Udinsk cossacks had returned his horse, the peasant from Iugovoi discovered that cossacks had only peacefully "watched" the village, while not even trying to take his horse, and Il'insk cossacks – the garrison was just twenty-four strong – asserted they had seen the cossacks, but could neither see who it was, nor how many rode with them. Vasilii Ivanov *syn* Shemiakinskoi, who signed and wrote the first letter calling for a meeting of the Selenga cossacks, and his comrades tried to spare themselves trouble in the immediate future when they stated:

> "[We] did not hear any shots. [Although we] saw the bullet hit the southern wall, [we] do not know who fired."[859]

This Il'insk *Personenverband*, however, had already proven very unstable during the days between the two statements, when a few of them, most prominently Ivan Pinega, had turned against the rest. Pinega, along with five other cossacks at Il'insk, decided to take advantage of the opportunity; he had good reason for this step. In the report by Irkutsk cossacks sent in early 1696 to apprehend illegal distillers in the villages on the lower Selenga, Pinega was mentioned as one of those who managed to disappear before the arrival of the Irkutians. One of the tiny group of supporters of Borisov, Stepan Okhera, rode to Udinsk to inform Turchaninov's enemies about a good opportunity to seize the *prikazchik*; Okhera was later awarded a horse from the Udinsk booty.[860]

On 20th March thirty Udinsk cossacks arrived at Il'insk, showing little respect for the locals: They "gave us [witnesses, Il'insk cossacks] their horses to keep them at the merchants' hall" and encircled Turchaninov's home. Turchaninov hid in his

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[858] This translation of "*s tovaryshchi*" avoids a possessive pronoun not found in the sources, which might be seen as contradicting the equality of the cossacks.

[859] RGADA f.1121 op.2 no.164, ll.1-8 (investigation); ibid. no.422 l.78 (petition); Aleksandrov, "Materialy", 351

[860] Ibid., 357; RGADA f.1121 op.1 no.467, l.124 (investigation), no.420, ll.41-3 (investigation); no.509, l.60 (excerpt)

homestead, which he defended with the help of his brother-in-law Petr Fedorov, clerk Fedor Kotiurev, cossack *desiatnik* Emelian Panikadilshchikov and Ivan Bechevin. The last two are remarkable for their role in the rebellion. Bechevin, whose role at Turchaninov's place is not clear, was an unassuming ropemaker and spinner and hardly a rich man, but he disapproved of the rising, given that he was one of the witnesses who accused Pezhemskii.[861] Significantly, he was not among those who were beaten by the rebels, a disparate group after all, which also included outsiders to the immediate struggle. Panikadilshchikov's position, as already mentioned, was much more ambivalent – at this stage, he identified with the majority of Il'insk cossacks, perhaps slightly overfulfilling their expectations; to portray him as Turchaninov's devoted supporter would distort the rebellion.

The next day, while the siege continued, abbot Misailo of Troitskii monastery on the Selenga near Il'insk arrived, but could not convince the rebels to spare Turchaninov. Nevertheless, Turchaninov went with Misailo to church. The rebels recognised the monastery's immunity as well as the right of the *prikazchik* to attend a church service. Udinsk cossacks only seized him in the merchants' hall after he had left church on his own. They led him to the *prikazchik*'s office and cast him in irons; he was guarded by Udinsk cossacks "and by Il'insk cossacks on duty according to the sovereign's decree".

Il'insk cossacks witnessing this event stressed the absence of Selenginsk cossacks. There were more supporters of Turchaninov at Il'insk than historians allow who follow the interpretation of a conflict between the upper class and the poor cossacks – Ivan Ievlev, for example, added that "Udinsk cossacks and the cossacks Aleksei Balmashnoi, Anika Moiseev, …Pinega, Petr Shestakov and…Okhera beat the clerk Fedor Kotiurev, …Panikadilshchikov, Ivan Shemiakinskoi, the retired cossack Petr Kyzylov and me with sticks not caring about our lives." Kotiurev actually died after the beating. The witnesses interrogated in 1699 were all rather obscure rank-and-file cossacks, who claimed that they had also suffered from Savelov's reluctance to pay out their grain salary in the preceding year. Yet despite

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[861] RGADA f. 1121 op. 1 no. 88, ll. 31-6 (investigation)

evident patronage which had connected Savelov and Turchaninov at least in 1695[862], nearly all of them expressed strong disapproval of Turchaninov's arrest:

> "Udinsk cossacks detained Turchaninov and deposed him from his office by force, against the will of Il'insk cossacks. We do not know for what grievances they deposed him and took him to Udinsk. And [we], the cossacks of Il'insk fortress, told the Udinsk cossacks 'for what reason did you take Grishka Turchaninov from office and fetch him to Udinsk and who will hold office at Il'insk to take care of the sovereign's affairs?'"

Harassed Udinsk cossacks countered this argument by an uncommonly elaborate speech, which the witnesses repeated verbatim:

> "We carry Grishka Turchaninov to Udinsk since he did not let pass grain traders to Udinsk. He intercepted them at Il'insk and took [grain] for himself, brewed beer and distilled alcohol from it; he wanted to starve the Udinsk musketeers. Grishka also prohibited Udinsk musketeers from staying overnight in Il'insk. Grishka falsely reported to Irkutsk that [we] rode through the villages, robbed the peasants and shot at Il'insk fort with harquebus. Nothing like that happened, and so we bring Grishka to Udinsk for his treachery."

On account of the pointed question about a new *prikazchik*, the Udinsk cossacks, according to Il'insk witnesses, also did not hesitate to act confrontationally and avoided asking the Il'insk cossacks for a suitable candidate:

> "They said 'we leave you in Turchaninov's place even two *prikazchiki* at once.'"[863]

A minority of witnesses – the cossacks Semen Tarkhov, Alekscі Balmashnoi, Anika Moiseev and Petr Semenov – however, were not entirely satisfied with this version of Turchaninov's deposition. At least two of them had been implicated in the confrontations on the Udinsk side. They hinted at conflict with the *iasak*-paying Buryats who accused Turchaninov publicly at Il'insk of illicitly acquiring the sovereign's furs. These cossacks were nevertheless content with amending this to a common statement of disapproval about Udinsk interference with Il'insk affairs. It was one rank-and-file cossack, Ivan Alenin, whose separate statement deviated from the common stand taken by other witnesses at Il'insk. In his version, emphasis was put on Turchaninov's illicit gains during collection of the *iasak*, and he acquitted Udinsk cossacks and their supporters at Il'insk of some of the most extreme and

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[862] Aleksandrov, *Vlast'*, 306
[863] RGADA f.1121 op.1 no.467, ll.120-9 (investigation)

illegal actions of which they had been accused – such as beating the "uninvolved" Ivan Ievlev and Vasilii Shemiakinskii as well as chaining Turchaninov. He also strove to shorten the period during which the appointed *prikazchiki* ruled without a proper election or other written document, claiming, "within a day Savelov sent a decree ordering Stepan Kazan' to hold office."[864] It was thus by no means unfeasible after the accession of the new voevoda Ivan Fedorovich Nikolev in late 1698 to express sympathy with Udinsk cossacks. Enmity between many Il'insk rank-and-file cossacks and Udinsk was a reality in 1696, and cannot be dismissed as a mere attempt to reduce witnesses' culpability in 1699.

On 22nd March 1696, just before the Udinsk cossacks left Il'insk, some Selenginsk cossacks from the hamlets in the Kudarinsk steppe made their appearance. They disapproved of the Udinsk choice for the post of *prikazchik*. Instead of Novikov, they favoured *piatidesiatnik* Stepan Kazan'. Once conflict with Itantsynsk Buryats had proven stifling to the settlers' cause, they changed their priorities and sought to arrange more peaceful relations with the nomads. Kazan' was a law-abiding person, as far as the records can tell; in February 1699 his practice as a *prikazchik* yielded a rare approving petition by Itantsynsk Buryats which criticised the appointed *prikazchik* of Selenginsk, Leont'ei Chiuzhakin, while speaking out in favour of Kazan's candidacy, because he "is well versed in judging according to our customs"; this was despite quarrels over land in which he, as a Kudarinsk settler, was involved.[865] Leont'ei's son Ivan was recruited for cossack service at Selenginsk in 1711 as a newly-baptised Mongol; his father's origin however was the town of Iarensk, while the bribe of ten roubles – a *postav kamki* – which he paid for the recruitment of his son shows that he was moderately well-established in Selenginsk – all of which may explain the alienation.[866] Mongols were not always on easy terms with the Buryats.[867] Ivan signed petitions aimed at Savelov and Turchaninov's distilling activities, indicating he sided with the rebels.

Shortly after the accession of Novikov and Kazan' as *prikazchiki*, conflict between Udinsk and the lower Selenga was rife again. The merchandise of the

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[864] Ibid. ll.103-12 (investigation)
[865] Ibid. no.405, l.138 (petition)
[866] Ibid. no.88, l.40 ob. (petition); ibid. f.214 kn.1619, l.49 (investigation)
[867] RGADA f.1121 op.1 no.88, ll.100 (petition)

voevoda of Nerchinsk, Anton Ivanov *syn* Savelov had been seized by Udinsk cossacks, but the issue was contentious, and the wares, primarily alcohol and hops were sealed in the sovereign's cellar at Il'insk by Udinsk *piatidesiatnik* Oshurkov and Kazan'. Soon afterwards, Oshurkov was sent again on orders from Udinsk to weigh the seized commodities but was prevented from accomplishing his task at Il'insk. Thereupon *piatidesiatnik* Borisov, leader of the Udinsk rebels, rode to Il'insk with over ten armed men. Threatening force, he ordered Kazan' to return immediately; Kazan', who had left for a marriage ceremony at Kaban'sk, returned to Il'insk where, with the support of Il'insk cossacks, he refused to open the cellar, claiming he was awaiting orders from Irkutsk. Borisov illicitly and, as Il'insk witnesses stressed, "by force and against the will of Il'insk cossacks" opened the seals and sold part of the alcohol, while the rest was drunk on the spot or brought to Udinsk.[868] Indeed, as Kazan' was yet to experience, the Udinsk *Personenverband* proved the more menacing reality on the Selenga. After all, conflict between Udinsk and the *prikazchik approved* by the cossacks was also proof of more persistent fault lines – before the establishment of Udinsk, Selenginsk was the undisputed centre of the Selenga valley, whereas in administrative terms it was downgraded by Golovin, and by 1696 the Udinsk *Personenverband* even attempted to sever existing ties between the lower Selenga and Selenginsk, by then, in comparison to Udinsk, a distant steppe outpost.

Nevertheless, conflicts between the law and the cossack right of supply were not confined to those between Il'insk and Udinsk; they also played a role internally in Udinsk. *Syn boiarskii* Maksim Posel'skii was in trouble for trying to secure M. Arsen'ev's personal belongings which were safe in storage, sealed by Posel'skii and a Nerchinsk *tseloval'nik*. For opposing their demand to break the seal, Borisov's recently-recruited cossacks beat Posel'skii and a number of rank-and-file Udinsk cossacks. Yet this was neither a conflict about different tactics, nor was it caused by distinctions of wealth among the participants. Five rank-and-file cossacks broke the silence otherwise so pervasive in Udinsk, accusing Borisov of stealing "with many people" Anton I. Savelov's barley without even possessing the key to the barn. Rank-

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[868] Ibid., no.403 l.41-54 (investigation)

and-file cossacks who tried to dissuade Borisov's comrades from this action were threatened with sabres.[869] It may well be doubted, in this case too, that it was only the "housed" cossacks who opposed the distribution "*na pai*" of Mikhail Arsen'ev's merchandise.[870] As discussed above, voevodas enjoyed a certain leeway concerning the prohibition of trade, since Moscow knew very well that under frontier conditions the best – and perhaps only – means to persuade administrators to take up their posts was to exploit their self-interest. A voevoda and *stol'nik* with connections such as M.M. Arsen'ev was likely to be held in such esteem that a *syn boiarskii* would fare better if he did not raise his hand. On the other hand, the leaders could rely on being clandestinely supported if they wanted, during a rebellion, to stylise themselves as loyalists. But the same was not necessarily applicable to Borisov, who as the leader of a *Personenverband* was under pressure to succeed in providing supplies to justify his role as a leader and to avoid punishment by the group. He was already too exposed to avoid being tainted. Nevertheless, even Borisov tried to make such a case, referring to his journey with two hundred cossacks to Irkutsk: During investigation he claimed that he was "sent [by the cossack circle] with the newly-recruited cossacks to Irkutsk."[871] He knew very well that his statement could not be refuted, even though he could not corroborate it, nor would any of his former followers suffer from it.

All of these cases were characterised by requisitions resolved in exclusive cossack circles, while even rank-and-file cossacks frequently disagreed. They were overwhelmingly attributed by witnesses to newly-recruited cossacks, who had a record of robbing along their way from Western Siberia. In part these requisitions were motivated by legitimate concerns of supply, but there was also the aim of increasing the Udinsk cossacks' influence over the Selenga settlements. Opponents of the requisitions however did not fit into any social category. Despite the arbitrary rule of the cossack circles, there was also a sense of legality among cossacks, even in rough-and-ready Udinsk. Two considerations of customary as well as codified law conflicted – the right of cossacks to be fed during a crisis, and the right of the

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[869] Ibid., ll.41-3
[870] Aleksandrov, *Vlast'*, 309-10
[871] RGADA f.1121 op.1 no.419, l.9 (investigation)

voevodas and other administrators to receive remuneration for their service. Over and above the immediate crisis, however, there were also concerns of power and influence in the Baikal region.

Confrontation

When cossacks from Udinsk, Selenginsk, Il'insk and Kaban'sk united in May to travel across lake Baikal to Irkutsk to claim their grain salary, they did not form one large army, but stuck to their respective *Personenverbände*. Even during the heyday of the uprising, there was no one organisation embracing all Selenga cossacks, let alone an estate. Cossacks used two large flat-bottomed vessels and a small boat for transport across the unpredictable Lake Baikal, each of which were manned by either Selenginsk and lower Selenga cossacks or by Udinsk cossacks and a few partisans from Il'insk.[872] Blinded by their belief that Irkutsk cossacks would support the rebellion, they turned down the most extensive concession voevoda Savelov ever made: To avert the threat posed by the rebels, he agreed to pay out grain salary in advance for 1696/1697 as well as for the current year. This seemed insufficient to the Selenga rebels, who felt safety in numbers and still nourished the futile belief that Afonasii Beiton would open the gates of Irkutsk to them, or at least give orders to turn away the threatening cannons on the towers. They demanded that their full allowance in cash should be paid in advance as well, but Savelov refused. During negotiations, the Selenga cossacks were already kept at a distance, the voevoda did not allow them to enter the fortress. When they finally opted for his deposition, laying siege to Irkutsk, Selenga cossacks were surprised to find that in town nobody was interested in the sovereign's deed they had declared, claiming that Savelov had tried to sell prohibited wares – such as weapons – to the Mongols.[873] According to Aleksandrov and Pokrovskii "obviously the Irkutsk upper class" was responsible for thwarting the attempt to depose Savelov, since they wished to retain their influence in Irkutsk. It is indeed futile to question whether wealthy Irkutsk cossacks were interested in the possibility of a representative of the Selenga ruling in Irkutsk. But there is much less indication of lesser cossacks' sympathies for the rebels. The

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[872] Ibid. no.378, l.31 (investigation)
[873] Aleksandrov, *Vlast'*, 313

cleavages between Irkutsk and the Selenga were largely based on issues of trade politics, involving most of the Irkutsk cossacks, since their economy depended on foreign trade. Only a handful of cossacks, some members of the *posad* and a few trappers changed sides, most of them in the countryside and a few fleeing from direct oppression on the part of the voevoda who tried to cover up the traces of his misdemeanours.[874]

Afonasii Beiton was not the only person the Selenga rebels misjudged, and they expressed their disappointment accusing Irkutsk inhabitants in general of being traitors who, in the Nerchinsk treaty, "left three towns in the hands of the Chinese emperor."[875] Disgruntled Selenga veterans of the battles for the Amur had lost their stake in trade – up to the Treaty of Nerchinsk, the Selenga towns served as bustling markets for Chinese products, but lost that position when hostilities ceased on the Amur. Due to the war between the Manchus and the Dzhungars, from 1689 to 1703 the Manchurian caravan route became the sole road to China although it was much longer than the Central or Mongolian route beginning at Selenginsk. For Selenga cossacks, war on the Amur held the promise of survival, booty and, for many, increased opportunities for profitable trade. Betrayed over their share in the spoils of the peace of Nerchinsk and the war they had fought, Selenga cossacks were now denied the leader they had hoped for to guide them to the Amur. What is more, in a petition "inhabitants of all ranks of the town of Irkutsk" condemned the siege of Irkutsk, claiming "the rebels came with many men to town...rudely and not according to custom" and referred to their overblown salary demands. Little is known about the way this petition was drawn up. Its exaggerated and formulaic claims concerning the revenue Savelov had managed to increase during his tenure, were not backed up by any facts and were probably intended to be helpful to the voevoda in his dealings with the Siberian chancellery. Nevertheless, to claim that this petition "did not express the mood of all layers of Irkutsk inhabitants" on all counts seems too far fetched.[876] In July 1696, Savelov was still able to collect statements corroborating the view of the petition of almost all Irkutsk inhabitants as well as the

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[874] RGADA f.1121 op.2 no.160, ll.8, 21 (investigation)
[875] Aleksandrov, *Vlast'*, 315
[876] Ibid., 313

cossacks, peasants and trappers of surrounding settlements and *ostrogi* of the western Baikal region.[877]

Where the Irkutsk petition describes the siege, a much less formulaic language comes to the fore than in the parts flattering the voevoda, stressing that the rebels wanted to "rule the town of Irkutsk". Not only had the rebels called for the deposition of the voevoda, but also once it became obvious that Irkutsk cossacks were disinclined to comply, the rebels charged them with treason and rebellion, claiming that they had conspired with the voevoda. Tellingly, the petition claimed that it was *deti boiarskie* and cossacks who had been robbed, but did not mention any *posadskie liudi*. Selenga cossacks identified the *posad* with its agents of lofty Moscow merchants as a potential partner, and not, as they viewed Irkutsk cossacks, as rivals blocking their access to wealth. In this, they differed from earlier rebels, for example in Tomsk, where Moscow merchants were confronted as allies of the voevoda. Probably the much-increased distances and higher turnover of caravan trade on the direct route to China changed these perceptions. The petitioners also confessed that they were appalled by the threats uttered towards Irkutsk inhabitants:

> "They said: 'We [Selenga rebels] are not going to leave Irkutsk, we will live here fearlessly. But if we are indeed forced to leave..., we will return in winter, with five or six hundred men, and depose the voevoda.' [The rebels also] threatened that we [Irkutians] will not be able to hide."

Before accepting that the opportunity was forsaken, enraged Selenga rebels inimically warned that:

> "If anybody shoots a single bullet at us, we will burn the fortress from one side, and on the other side we will kill the inhabitants of Irkutsk!"[878]

The loyalty to the Siberian chancellery and the tsar displayed by the Irkutsk cossacks was also motivated by a specific kind of protection and patronage afforded by chancelleries to certain kinds of low-born clients, motivated by their tax-paying potential, which usually depended on their group status.[879] Irkutsk was a similar case, as Andrei Osharov's loyalty demonstrates. Although he was suffering harrassment in

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[877] RGADA f.1121 op.1 no.381, ll.114-136 Savelov's copy quotes signatures of almost all Irkutians.

[878] Aleksandrov, "Materialy", 367-70

[879] Shveikovskaia, *Gosudarstvo*, 266-77.

1696 from his creditor, the *syn boiarskii* Sidor Shestakov, and the voevoda, Osharov nevertheless did not support the Selenga rebels. Considering his record of financial reliability afforded by the Siberian chancellery through a binding promise of permanently paying Osharov's future reimbursement to his creditor Shestakov, Osharov had little reason to break away from the chancellery (see chapter II). In 1698/1699 Osharov, enjoying the trust of Irkutsk cossacks and their elected *sud'ia* Ivan Perfil'ev, accompanied the treasury to Moscow with his "comrade" Tit Evseev.[880]

Evseev was consistently loyal to the Siberian chancellery, too: In 1697/1698 he denounced a peasant of Ilimsk, T. Kopytov, who had written a "letter of advice" to Evseev in 1696 concerning the Krasnoiarsk rebellion, asking what had happened in Irkutsk and whether "you are staunch supporters of the affair?" Kopytov was banned to Turukhansk.[881] Evseev's son Ivan was a major witness in favour of the *posadskii* Gerasim Lyskovets, who accused voevoda Savelov of embezzlement and ordering the theft of his possessions.[882] Thus alongside noble patronage networks controlled largely by voevodas, there existed networks sponsored by the Siberian chancellery as well as others, at least to a degree based on friendship. None of these, with the potential exception of some networks spawned by great nobles, could subsist for a long time without the support of the *Personenverband.*

Much less obvious are the motives that inclined the Selenga rebels to adopt a threatening stance. Rather than universal hatred, a more flexible attitude may have prevailed. Their threats served them well when it came to negotiating loans on advance salary. In addition to the grain reimbursement drawn from the Bel'skii fortress for the upcoming year 1696/1697, the actual extent of which was contested by the rebels and the voevoda, they also managed to compel several Irkutsk *deti boiarskie* and the founder of the Irkutsk monastery of the Ascension to lend them 500 *quarters* of rye each. Considering the precedents mentioned above, the rebels may well have credited themselves with a good deal, since Moscow appeared predisposed to grant repayment.[883]

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[880] RGADA f.1121 op.1 no.175, ll.41-2 (petition, decision)
[881] Ogloblin, *Obozrenie* pt. III, 330
[882] RGADA f.1121 op.2 no.160, l.14 (investigation)
[883] Ibid. no.156, ll.1-2 (petition)

After the sieges of Irkutsk and raids on the hamlets of two *deti boiarskie* in the vicinity of the town, the high point of unity among Selenga cossacks drew close. Subsequent splits and quarrels after the near-failure at Irkutsk have been explained by different appreciations of tactics by the upper ranks and ordinary cossacks, the latter being more radical than the former. Close examination of the sources, however, brings a welter of evidence to light that proves that it was hardly this issue, which proved so divisive. Already on their way across lake Baikal back to the Selenga, purportedly "radical" leaders struggled for survival – their strategy had failed and they needed a new incentive, having failed in their bid for wealth. Thus Borisov wrote a letter to Udinsk, demanding the immediate deposition of the *prikazchik* Andrei Beiton. Those cossacks who had stayed in Udinsk complied without hesitation. Yet Beiton had been a trusted *prikazchik* since before the treaty between Selenginsk and Udinsk had been signed. Aleksandrov and Pokrovskii ignored continuity in their account of the Selenga rebellion, and they even managed to depose the *prikazchik* twice, although witnesses unequivocally stated that he was deposed only once, when the cossacks returned from Irkutsk. Indeed, the uncorroborated first deposition of Andrei Beiton serves as the crucial backdrop for the hypothesis of a democratic regime in Udinsk.[884] Reality was not so straightforward. Conflicting factions kept to the proper idea of autocracy, which was always a bone of contention, allowing for considerable leeway for conflicting interpretations. Borisov was motivated by the mechanisms of power in the *Personenverband* – once its aims were thwarted, it sought to change its leader. Thus there was indeed a network spun between fortresses – but instead of being exclusively based on ordinary cossacks, and oppositional in outlook, it was based on the reputation of leaders and knitted between cossack leaders and *Personenverbände* – or at least potential *Personenverbände*, for they had to be formed first. And since Afonasii Beiton, the father of Andrei, had refused to act as the Selenga's leader, spy and representative, his son, too, lost influence.

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[884] Aleksandrov, "Materialy", 352, 357. Cf. Aleksandrov, *Vlast'*, 308-9, 315

Trade and Rebellion

The disintegration of the rebel forces was already underway during their return to the Selenga. An incident on the upper reaches of the Angara, close to lake Baikal, proved very divisive, as revealed in particular during an investigation in 1698/1699. There are several versions concerning who robbed and tortured the rank-and-file Irkutsk cossack Ivan Isakov and his servant Fedot Kochnev. Isakov, returning from Nerchinsk with merchandise, met with the Selenga rebels on the Angara above Irkutsk. He had probably made a good profit at Nerchinsk, as yields even in internal Siberian trade averaged twenty-two to twenty-five percent.[885] The cossack claimed later, in a rather formulaic way, that almost every Selenga cossack had committed the crime:

> "The Selenginsk, Udinsk, Il'insk and Kabansk cossacks Berezovskii, Borisov, Pinega, and their traitorous *iasaul* Ivashko Ivanov and comrades – over 200 men – assailed me…they beat and wounded me to within an inch of my life, not like Christians do, with larch rods…they badly maimed and robbed me and my serf worker."[886]

Court protocols concerning the Irkutsk witnesses he cited have not survived, although virtually everyone who was involved in this incident appeared for interrogation by voevoda Nikolev.

There are no doubts concerning several of the Udinsk cossacks, again – as already in the Il'insk incidents – most prominent among them Borisov, Ivan Ivanov syn Durnitsyn and their Il'insk ally and former Udinsk cossack Pinega. Borisov admitted that he was a member of the band which had assaulted Isakov, although he claimed that all the cossacks had perpetrated robbery "to the last one", making it easier for him to claim that he had been forced to participate by the majority in the *Personenverband.* He also tried to invoke the sovereign's mercy, since as he said

> "we did not receive your sovereign's merciful salary at that time, we were scraggy and hungry".[887]

His strategy for his defence, trying *post factum* to create a unified *Personenverband,* failed although it was supported by eleven Udinsk cossacks and

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[885] Mancall, *China*, 188
[886] RGADA f.1121 op.1 no.378, l.10 (petition)
[887] Ibid., ll.24-5 (investigation)

strel'tsy, who never failed to back him. They admitted at the same time that they had taken Isakov's possessions "by force". Six other Udinsk cossacks also refused to make any statement at all; four of them, however, were listed as robbers.

Borisov's statement was repeated word by word by Durnitsyn and Pinega, who had exposed themselves to such a degree that any other strategy could only fail. Nevertheless it was more than the prisoner's dilemma that brought down the united Selenga front. Among the 150-200 cossacks present on the barges there was nobody else who was ready to speak out at all. Once the *prikazchik* of Udinsk was in prison in Irkutsk, however, other Selenga cossacks defied him. Il'insk E. Panikadilshchikov, as already mentioned, had good reasons to wish Borisov and Pinega the worst, even though he had taken part in the campaign to Irkutsk led by Borisov. On top of asserting that it was Borisov, Durnitsyn and Pinega who had led the band, he did not fail to call the extortion by the proper orthodox term – "*vymuchenie*", thus adding to the growing ostracism Borisov faced by 1698/1699.[888]

Selenginsk *desiatnik* Anton Berezovskii, leader of the second barge, who in 1698/1699 was sent to Eniseisk under guard on other charges, claimed that he had never wanted to be involved in the crime, although the above-mentioned Udinsk witnesses asserted that he was among the active robbers. He claimed that he had jumped on the bank seeking to stop the beatings when he heard Isakov's cries on the barge. While nobody supported this over-assertive claim Selenginsk cossacks did not fail to support their leader. Although they had not seen anything at all of the robbery and torture, they claimed it was Borisov and his comrades who had brought Isakov's possessions to the barges, where they were divided among the cossacks. One of these witnesses was a *godovalshchik* from Udinsk, who was not accused and not even mentioned in any of the three lists of those cossacks who divided the booty. Since he had become part of the Selenginsk *Personenverband*, he accommodated to his new if fleeting place of abode and kept to his Selenginsk comrades' version.[889] Udinsk voices are perhaps more revealing, although some of them are themselves not free of doubts, such as *piatidesiatnik* Ivan Alemasov, who in his statements concerning earlier events also attempted to distance himself from the atrocities committed by

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[888] On political theology, see chapt.I, 57-67.
[889] RGADA f.1121 op.1 no.378, l.40 (investigation)

Borisov and his comrades. His attempt to exclude Borisov and his closest entourage from the *Personenverband* was cast in unambiguous words:

> "He [Alemasov] did not tell them to rob or to behave traitorously and villainously. They did that all on their own and asked nobody else [to give advice]."[890]

The robbery also brought about the breakaway of Anisim Kozmin syn Paderin, an Udinsk *piatidesiatnik* elected petitioner in May 1696, charged with the task of representing the Udinsk *Personenverband* in Moscow at least until 1698. The tsar's first decree ordering investigation of the rebellion, dated 23rd June 1697, was prompted by Paderin's report at Moscow denouncing the robberies.[891] His case shows that even among Udinsk cossacks, at an early stage in the unfolding of the rebellion, individuals could change their allegiances. Even Borisov had signed Paderin's *vybor* – for a purported "member of the upper strata". While the *Personenverband* was isolated most of the time in the frontier region, issues of salary and confrontations with merchants could open a field of opportunity which made it look more like a network, split into shifting coalitions which were forged by cleavages and followed contingent events.

The Siberian chancellery was alerted to the dangers to trade posed by the *Personenverband.* The decree answered to this peculiar condition of trade in the frontier area in a typical Muscovite and appropriately ambiguous way:

> "...they robbed merchants and trappers of all ranks and distributed the proceeds among themselves. Investigate by all means thoroughly. If [your investigation], Afonasii Savelov's reports and the interrogation of Anisimko Paderin show that the [Selenga] servitors are...guilty, first try to coax them from their traitorous and rebellious ways and reassure them of our great sovereign's grace and salary, considering the local customs. Aim at distracting them from their villainous affairs and to win them over to *biti chelom* to the...sovereign and deliver the worst traitors, instigators and those who started this *smuta* for investigation. When they [agree], investigate by all means how much they robbed from the...voevodas, which chattels and wares and their prices and what they took from other people of all ranks and from merchants. Interrogate each of them

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[890] Ibid., ll.17-42, here: l.42 (investigation)

[891] Ibid. no.394, l.10 (decree); no.381, l.11 (election). Few Paderins are known in the Baikal region, of unclear kinship status. Apart from D. Paderin in Irkutsk, who contracted supplies of 400 *pud* grain in 1687, there was only Pavel Paderin, an Udinsk *desiatnik* and *tseloval'nik* who made a decisive statement accusing Borisov in 1698: Aleksandrov, *Dal'nevostochnykh*, 152; RGADA f.1121 op.1 no.403, l.14 (investigation); no.88, l.85 (decree)

individually. Put all stolen goods in our great sovereign's treasury and put those traitors and worst instigators in prison…until you receive our…decree."[892]

The decree made provisions for settling the conflict by punishing its alleged instigators. This was a form of negotiation frequently applied in the dealings between the cossacks and the government, which meant former leaders no longer dear to the Personenverband were used as bargaining chips.[893]

It was Ivan Pinega's letter, which was most detrimental to the common cause so ineffectively set in motion by Borisov. His letter also documents the involvement of the rebels in trade networks. Pinega admitted to have cashed in the *kabala* they had stolen from Isakov, while leaving any further resolution concerning appropriation of the remaining outstanding debt to the Udinsk cossacks. In his address he left little doubt as to whom he considered his master and source of legitimate power – he included the *piatidesiatniki*, thus counting the so-called "upper layer" in the *Personenverband* at a rather late point:

"To our masters the Udinsk *piatidesiatniki*, *desiatniki* and rank-and-file cossacks mounted and on foot Il'insk cossack Ivashko Grigor'ev *syn* Pinega knocks the forehead. 100 roubles have been taken from Afonasii Putimets' but he did not pay out nine roubles. He entreated to be released; on account of these nine roubles the merchants Ivan Maksimovich and Porkpie Iakovlev signed a guarantee for Afonasii. Afonasii says that these nine roubles are on the bill for us in Irkutsk. Now it is your masters' decision whether the rest shall be recovered from Afonasii…. Our masters *piatidesiatniki*..., have mercy on me masters and give me my remuneration (*zarabotishko*) for my travel expenses and for the zeal I have shown. I will be your slave (*rabotnik*) in future as you see fit. For this I am knocking my forehead."[894]

The putative stratification of cossacks on lake Baikal is called in question by this letter which also concerns the processing of the extorted *kabala*. This promissory note was part of Isakov's possessions; the robbers exacted it along with a voluntary conveyance (*dannaia*) making the *kabala* payable to Ivan Pinega. It is most revealing for the structure of Muscovite – and Siberian – society that merchants collaborated to such a degree with the rebel cossacks who were described by Isakov as

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[892] Ibid., no.394 ll.10-1 (decree)
[893] Perrie, "Outlawry" 530-42
[894] RGADA f.1121 op.1 no.378, l.43. Letter not written before early 1697: see below Putimets's return to Irkutsk.

"traitors, rioters and murderers of the soul (*dushegubtsy*)".

Isakov however did not content himself with verbal abuse. After his wretched return to Irkutsk he soon started litigation. His aim was to exact from his debtor, Afonasii Putimets, or from Putimets's agent at Irkutsk, Prokof'ii Ivanov, the money left from his transactions. But Ivanov failed to comply with his obligations, although Isakov produced a letter presented to Ivanov by Putimets's salesman at Il'insk, which ordered the payment of 109 roubles to Isakov. In a desperate mood after the siege, voevoda Savelov ordered Ivanov to be flogged daily between 22nd and 30th of July 1696, a practice called *pravezh*, a legal procedure to exact debts.[895] On the 31st Ivanov demanded a delay in payment which was granted until 18th of August; even thereafter, from day to day Ivanov tried to convince Isakov that his patron would return and arrange for payment, yet Isakov found out that his debtor had set out for northern China, to the emporium of Naun. According to Isakov, Ivanov soon proceeded to threaten him with the loss of his debt, saying Putimets would pay the robbers at Il'insk. With Savelov's power already waning, nothing was done until in early 1697, Afonasii Putimets returned to Irkutsk. Irkutsk cossacks had recently deposed Savelov in a kind of velvet rebellion, but even then the so-called unity of the cossack upper strata did not exert any influence on Isakov's litigation. Summoned to the voevoda's office by elected *sud'ia* and *syn boiarskii* Ivan Perfil'ev, Putimets bluntly stated that he had paid 109 roubles to Pinega and Durnitsyn at Il'insk when presented with the *kabala* and the voluntary conveyance, and added that "they did not use any force to oblige me". Indeed, there was no need to resort to brute force in this case, since the cossacks could rely on the assurance signed by two other merchants at Il'insk guaranteeing the remaining nine roubles, which Putimets had not paid on the spot. To Durnitsyn and Pinega, Putimets was part of the trade networks they and their allies on the Selenga wanted to do business with. On the one hand, the newly-established trade partners relied on a sense of due process all too present in Putimets's and Pinega's argumentation. As *prikazchik* of the Moscow *gost'* Alekseı Filat'ev, on the other hand, Putimets could also rely on his superior's protection, yet what actually interfered with any serious steps towards redress of Isakov's grievance

[895] Dewey, Horace, "Coercion by Righter ('*Pravezh*') in Old Russian Administration", *CASS* vol.9 (1975), 156-67

was the continuing power of the Udinsk cossacks in the Selenga valley. Although this power was already waning seriously, as we have seen before, Isakov's case was at the very heart of the Selenga rebellion. Isakov never made an attempt to reclaim the money from Pinega until the rebel leaders had been deposed. Unlike in other cases, he did not succeed until a new voevoda arrived in Irkutsk with renewed qualities of leadership and readiness to impart patronage. It was only his petition in 1699 that set in motion the separate investigation mentioned above on 2nd February, when voevoda Nikolev summoned Borisov, Pinega and Durnitsyn to Irkutsk for interrogation. The total judgement debt owed to Isakov amounted to 329 roubles plus the *kabala*; not even this modestly wealthy rank-and-file cossack could find any redress to his grievance against a coalition of rebel *Personenverbände* and the Moscow-based networks of merchants.[896]

If Isakov entertained a notion of his foes as traitors, rioters and "soul-destroyers", the Selenga rebels mirrored it as best they could. The infuriated Isakov reported that when robbing him in the *zimov'e* on the Angara the cossacks again day-dreamed of their plans, which Chinese might would never allow in their lifetime, and the treaty of Nerchinsk finally sealed:

"It would be wonderful, father (*batiushka*), to recover Amur!"[897]

Protected from all sides Irkutsk gained much from the treaty of Nerchinsk, whereas the exposed Selenga had fought the Chinese allies, the Mongols, but lost most in the terms of the treaty. In other words, Udinsk cossacks told Isakov through this seemingly unconnected turn of phrase that in their eyes he was a traitor like all the rest of Irkutsk, who agreed with the terms of the treaty, and especially being a merchant – and therefore was rightfully robbed. Fighting the Chinese on the Amur would have meant that trade was diverted to the route through Mongolia and left Russian territory at Selenginsk. This expression was indicative of the self-image of the Selenga rebels, which was based largely on their grievances towards Savelov, and, by implication, all of Irkutsk. Most ominously, Isakov did not mention any questions on the part of Borisov concerning who owned his merchandise. Moisei Borisov, who claimed that when torturing Isakov he and his cossacks tried to

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[896] RGADA f.1121 op.1 no.378, ll.2-22 (investigation)
[897] Ibid. no.377, l.51 (investigation)

establish whether these were Savelov's goods, had to admit during investigation that the cossacks had stolen Isakov's private merchandise and movables, as well as that such an action was clearly against all law and custom. More forthrightly, showing disdain for Irkutsk, he also asserted that fifty roubles out of the booty from this raid were used to pay back the Udinsk cossacks' loans to the Irkutsk monastery of the Ascension.[898] Trying to veil his attempt to live up to the disappointed rebels' expectations of their leader at the expense of another rank-and-file cossack, Borisov failed dramatically; he, his closest Udinsk allies and the very few hardliners from Il'insk had gone too far. They were in consequence gradually isolated among most, if not all of their own followers, at the very latest during the investigation. Robbing a rank-and-file cossack threatened to destabilise trade; thus one of the basic tenets of the rebellion, to facilitate mercantile rivalry between Irkutsk and Nerchinsk, was in danger. No merchant dare send his goods through the Selenga valley, except the very largest, official caravans, even entrusting it to a cossack group, as long as the rebels could not even avoid robbing one of their own, a fellow cossack. Robbing Isakov, tempting though it was to Borisov after the near-failure at Irkutsk, proved the first step on the long road to the collapse of the rebellion. Isakov had felt fairly secure when he left Irkutsk. He travelled to and from the Selenga with only one servant, without any cover from fellow cossacks or other merchants – a *Personenverband* could have saved him from the small group of cossacks which assaulted him. The 1690s was already a period in which merchants could travel fairly safe most of the time; apart from on the open steppe commencing beyond Selenginsk and on the first part of the way from Udinsk to Nerchinsk, nomad assaults were infrequent.[899] Under such conditions, merchants, Irkutsk cossacks and the Siberian chancellery contended that a discontented cossack band garrisoned half-way to Nerchinsk had to be satisfied at nearly any cost.

It was the same disillusion which drove the Selenga rebels after the siege of Irkutsk to attack Stepan Kazan' in his homestead in the small village of Kolesnikov. Although during the investigation Udinsk cossacks tried to protect their leader, *piatidesiatnik* Maksim Posel'skii, they could not stop their Selenginsk comrades

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[898] Ibid. no.378, ll.24-5 (investigation)
[899] Ibid. no.422, ll.79-81, 88, 112-4 (petitions and excerpts); Hundt, *Beschreibung*, 143-4

from giving graphic and, in the most important details, concurring testimony of the injury inflicted on Kazan' and his family. It took some carefully calibrated provocation to overcome the inhibition to rob Kazan'. On returning from Irkutsk, where the Udinsk cossacks had at least received a substantial part of their grain salary, they moored on the banks of the Selenga in the hamlet of Kolesnikov, where Kazan' lived. According to custom, and with the earlier confrontations with Borisov in mind, Stepan Kazan' came to the barge offering a barrel of sturgeon as a gift (*v pochest'*), thus acknowledging Posel'skii's – and the absent Borisov's – authority and appeasing the cossacks. The Udinsk cossacks also haggled about another barrel, and Posel'skii "and comrades", as witnesses bothered to specify, finally agreed on a price of two roubles. Although cossacks fetched the barrel, however, Posel'skii and his men never paid the price. Kazan' appeared at the mooring and demanded his money. Reluctant to pay, Posel'skii sent his men, the Udinsk *desiatnik* Semen Uteshev and comrades to get even more fish. When they approached his homestead, according to one Selenginsk witness, Kazan' stood in the doorway asking sarcastically if desperately for how long they wanted to rob him. Without ceremony Uteshev and his men shot the *piatidesiatnik* with a musket. One witness saw Uteshev and his cossacks leaving Kazan's home, and found the wounded family, wife and daughter "staggering about in their blood". Kazan' claimed that fifty-seven roubles-worth of clothes were stolen and others torn, although there was no substantiation of this detail; but every witness remembered the five to six barrels of stolen fish. The *prikazchik* stressed that he had suffered disparagement, and thus feared to leave his house. Honour was an important regulatory force in Muscovite society; there were frequently cases of injured honour in court at Irkutsk as well.[900] Honour could have serious repercussion on the ability to offer leadership to cossacks. Thus in 1700 Nerchinsk cossacks dishonoured the new *rotmistr*, sent from Moscow. One cossack expressed the general opinion saying

> "at the voevoda's court...before many people threatening with disobedience: '...we do not obey those who are sent [from Moscow: the intermediary ranks]."[901]

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[900] Ogloblin, *Obozrenie*, III, 89-90; Ogloblin, "Tomskii", 240; Vershinin, *Voevodskoe*, 39; RGADA f.1121 op.1 no.362, l.93; op.2 no.16, l.94 (petition); no.123, ll.1-8 (investigation). On the legal protection of honour: Kollmann, *Honor*.

[901] Leont'eva, *Sluzhilye*, 93; RGADA f.214 kn.1388, l.224 (report)

Thus Kazan' risked losing all chance of future position if his reputation was impugned.

Kazan' therefore correctly estimated the motive for the crime: Posel'skii's tactical choice is less attributable to his social standing, but rather to his current position as the *Personenverband*'s leader – he had to reassert his role even more vigorously to embody the aims of the group he led, just as Kazan' had done earlier in confrontations with Borisov and the Udinsk cossacks. After their unexpected defeat at Irkutsk, the Udinsk cossacks sought to get even with their foes on the Selenga. Consequently, to evade reprisals on the part of the cossacks, for which he presented a target equal to Kazan', Posel'skii unleashed them on another putative member of the "upper layer of cossack society" who was in fact a leader of a rival *Personenverband.* Aleksandrov and Pokrovskii named Posel'skii as a candidate of the "housed" cossacks for the position of elected *prikazchik* at Udinsk in the early stages of the rebellion, to pronounce the difference to the *golyt'ba*, in an analogy to the Ukrainian and Don cossacks. This was a seemingly clear-cut case involving a number of cossacks frustrated by their forced resettlement, who shared an experience of brutal requisitioning unrestrained by any law or command. Still, in Siberia, there was no general resentment directed at the *piatidesiatnik.*[902]

Posel'skii choose a different tactic when he returned to Udinsk. When the possessions of Anton Savelov, the voevoda of Nerchinsk were fetched from the Il'insk Trinity monastery on the Selenga to Udinsk, it was Posel'skii's task to seal the storehouse's entrance. He also made several attempts to persuade the recently elected *prikazchik* Ivan Novikov, who relieved Borisov, to confiscate these possessions in favour of the sovereign's treasury; Novikov, however, was reluctant. Posel'skii's stance later pitched him against some of the newly-recruited cossacks, who in the summer of 1697 seized the chattels on the way to the *prikazchik*'s office. Other cossacks tried to dissuade them, but were repelled at sabre point, while the assets were distributed.[903] Nevertheless, Posel'skii remained a significant figure on the Selenga at least until 1700, supporting the remnants of the rebels' power. His personal policy was still to appease the *Personenverband*, but to single out criminal

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[902] Aleksandrov, *Vlast'*, 315; RGADA f.1121 op.1 no.467, l.4 (investigation)
[903] Ibid. no.403, l.24 (investigation). Dated according to Novikov's *vybor.*

leaders who had fallen from the *Personenverband's* favour: Thus, he gave testimony against Borisov in 1697/1698.[904]

The temporary alliance between Selenginsk and Udinsk was shattered after the assaults on Kazan' and Isakov, and threats uttered by Borisov in Irkutsk concerning another common Udinsk and Selenginsk campaign to besiege Irkutsk with even more cossacks therefore remained empty. Still, Borisov's power on the Selenga was unbroken for another year, and Kazan' did not dare to accuse Udinsk cossacks until 1700.[905]

The degree of power that undoubtedly remained with the Udinsk cossacks was not coterminous with Moisei Borisov's tenure of the position of *prikazchik*, which ended relatively soon, in September 1697.[906] Whereas some historians have judged him an ideal *prikazchik*, and believed him deposed exclusively by members of the upper strata, the Udinsk cossacks had serious grievances against him.[907] At first glance, it seems to confirm the strata theory that it was *piatidesiatnik* Semen D'iakonov who accused Borisov a year after the siege of Irkutsk, in September 1697, invoking publicly the *gosudarevo delo*. D'iakonov, however, was one of Borisov's closest advisors at least until the first week of Lent 1697, when Borisov's followers threatened to drown the "fat" cossacks in the water of the river Uda, while D'iakonov was still a member of the circle. His ambiguous role shows that the calculations of Borisov's closest advisors included the victimisation of some cossacks and *deti boiarskie* if such a step might bring control of the cossacks; but the charges brought against Borisov also testify to D'iakonov's acute awareness that the *prikazchik* had gone too far. Borisov was deposed and *syn boiarskii* Ivan Novikov was elected *prikazchik* "by the whole garrison", as he reported.[908] While many of the targeted "old" and "fat" cossacks fled Udinsk for a while, and conflict was undoubtedly rife, the confrontation over Anton Savelov's belongings shows that cleavages between those who maintained a legalist stance and the others who redistributed at sabre's point did not follow simple patterns of wealth and social standing. These cleavages

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[904] Ibid. no.468, ll.18; no.403, l.23 (investigations)
[905] Ibid. no.423, ll.1-9 (investigation)
[906] On 8th January, he was called "former" *prikashchik* by the Udinsk cossacks: ibid. no.88 l.83 (rescript).
[907] Cf. Aleksandrov, *Vlast'*, 315, 325
[908] RGADA f.1121 op.1 no.419, l.2 (petition); no.403, l.4 (investigation)

were rather drawn by a radicalisation stemming from forced recruitment, dislocation and the loss of prospects from which the newly recruited cossacks still suffered.

Charges brought against Borisov amounted not just to "a huge deficit in the sovereign's finances and gunpowder". The cossacks also claimed arrears amounting to half their salary for the year 1697/1698 by January, which meant that Borisov had not bothered to pay out the full annual allowance, although Moscow and Irkutsk had taken every imaginable step to ensure satisfactory levels of supplies. Altogether, Borisov was indicted of peculating 3,498 roubles, 150 furs of sable and fox and 51 bales of nankeens – a record sum given his short tenure. Two years' worth of salary were lost without a trace in the accounts.[909] Borisov, who had acceded to the office of elected *prikazchik* by vowing to uphold the common weal (the "*dobroe delo*") thus failed where Savelov had been accused, too. D'iakonov also blamed Borisov for showing favour to his sworn brother, the former cossack Matfei Leont'ev, who was sent to China with some of the wares and cash seized from the voevodas. As the *tselovalnik* Pavel Paderin asserted, the *prikazchik* clandestinely exempted Leont'ev from the tithe on exports which Udinsk cossacks had bothered to fix at thirty roubles in the circle. In this case, however, the rank-and-file Udinsk cossacks remained neutral, claiming ignorance.[910] It is thus not clear whether the enterprise was Borisov's private initiative or backed by his supporters, and it cannot be ruled out that Borisov, who could not be saved anyway, was the beast of burden of his former supporters.

Borisov's closest supporters provided a number of examples for a new engagement in trade. Some even managed to continue years after Borisov's deposition, enlisting the support of Udinsk cossacks, just as Pinega did in his transactions with Isakov's *kabala*. In September 1699 the son of the former cossack and member of Irkutsk *posad*, Nikifor Lanin Kazanets, Kozma, appeared in Udinsk *prikaznaia izba* to claim a *kabala* worth ninety roubles. Only one of the faulting debtors, the musketeer Vasilii Tsynkov, could be found in town. He cunningly persuaded the callow Kozma to petition by mutual agreement the *prikazchik*, Andrei Beiton, to release Tsynkov so that he could pay his debt at Kabansk. In October,

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[909] Ibid. no.88, ll.84-5 (rescript); Aleksandrov, *Vlast'*, 326
[910] RGADA f.1121 no.419, l.11; no.403, l.14; no.419, l.3 (investigations)

Kazanets returned with empty hands; he was offered horses and Nanking cotton cloth at an unacceptable price, as was confirmed by the witness he had taken to Kabansk, Udinsk *desiatnik* Vasilii Starozhilov. They also asserted that Ivan Novikov figured as Tsynkov's debtor, helping to deceive Kazanets. Kozma petitioned to Beiton, again only orally, without any written confirmation, to send for Tsynkov and his father Ivan and arrest them for failing to pay compensation. However, when the messenger arrived at Kabansk, Vasilii had disappeared and his father forcibly resisted arrest. To make things worse for Andrei Beiton, a witness appeared to assert that he had seen Beiton accepting a bribe, a horse offered by Tsynkov. The eye-witness, Kabansk cossack *desiatnik* Maksim Lobanov, also claimed that he had obliged himself to bring the horse back to Udinsk. The second guarantor for the deal he named, however, musketeer Sidor Fedorov, denied any involvement, although he admitted he had heard that Beiton had accepted an inducement.

Desperately seeking a way out, Beiton accused Lobanov of slander. There may have been some truth in this, yet in the first place it sheds light on conditions on the Selenga. Beiton was still condescending to the *Personenverband*, dominated in no small measure by the remaining rebels. Lobanov was caught right in the middle; he indeed had a grievance, and he was determined to carry his issue through. He backed another allegation at the same time, directed against Pinega, Balmashnoi and Okhera, who still lived in Il'insk in 1700. As Il'insk clerk Filip Leon'tev claimed, these three were notorious for their unruly behaviour; they owned nothing for the simple reason that they spent all day in the tavern and played at hazard and dice. In the eyes of Leont'ev, Lobanov and other cossacks, they were also not averse to further acts of treason and rebellion, an expectation that was underpinned by their role in the confrontations between Il'insk and Udinsk cossacks and the seizure of Turchaninov and the voevodas' possessions. What was more, Maksim Lobanov suffered from their blows and acts of robbery, which had cost him a horse and further possessions.[911] The two cases were connected by more than just a lone plaintiff – Vasilii's brother, Nefed Tsynkov, who was co-signatory of the failing *kabala*, who worked closely with Pinega and his comrades in 1696 with the aim of deposing

[911] Ibid. no.509, ll.58-60 (investigation)

Turchaninov.[912] Andrei Beiton, *prikazchik* of Udinsk though he was, had undertaken nothing to detain Pinega, Balmashnoi and Okhera; they were only taken to Moscow for investigation when the Beiton/Kazanets case was well under way in 1701. What is more, Nefed Tsynkov had been sent as a guard with the official caravan of merchant Spiridon Liangusov in 1699 to China; he was thus unavailable when Kazanets tried to recoup the debt. Whether he owed this favour – and the connected benefits in advance salary – to Beiton or to his good old friends in the Selenga and Udinsk network cannot be judged from the files; these appointments were often handled according to the "queue"; that is cossacks decided on these issues in a formalistic way. This kind of controlled rotation is indicative of distributive principles rooted in equality; inasmuch as they reigned over everyday life, it was not "modern" principles of selection that applied. Yet in the majority of cases, unlike the cossack groups Kumke observed in Ukraine, *ocherednost'* did not apply to leading functions. Merit, popularity and honour were the more frequent principles of selection observed by Siberian cossacks, which had a certain propensity for organisation and were not completely averse to hierarchy.[913] Still, whether the *ochered'* decided or not, it meant at least that cossacks enjoyed a high degree of influence on matters of assignment.

Thus it is hardly a coincidence that there were at least three well-known Udinsk rebels and supporters of Borisov among the eleven guards. Apart from Tsynkov these were Aleksei Uvarov, who was sent with the secret rebels' letter to Selenginsk in 1696 and accompanied the tsar's fur treasure to Moscow under Borisov in 1696/1697. I was not able to establish his kinship in Udinsk, although a *syn boiarskii*, Liubim, owner of saltworks who organised a caravan to China and served as an envoy to the Mongols lived there. So did the *piatidesiatnik* Ivan, whose possessions amounted to at least 600 roubles in Chinese atlas which he claimed were illegally appropriated by Turchaninov.[914] The third former supporter of Borisov on the 1699 caravan was Petr Kainov, indicted for killing Irkutsk cossacks in a conflict

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[912] Aleksandrov, "Materialy", 361

[913] Kumke, *Geführte*, 261. On the high frequency of the *ochered'* see Nikitin, *Sluzhilye*, 98-100; Bakhrushin, *Trudy*, vol.IV, 73; Aleksandrov, *Vlast'*, 157-8, 357; RGADA f.1121 op.1 no.457, l.34 (report)

[914] Ibid. no.330, ll.4-5; no.429 l.47 (investigation); Leont'eva, *Sluzhilye*, 321; Vasil'ev, *Zabaikal'skie kazaki*, 216

during the campaign and siege of Irkutsk.[915] Andrei Beiton became even more involved in this case when Kainov was eventually found in 1701 while he hid in Nerchinsk living "on building sites by his own fancy, not enlisted as a Nerchinsk cossack", after returning from China, the voevoda reported. Andrei Beiton stopped the convict's transport, changed the guards and ordered *poruki* signed in Udinsk. But Kainov, unsurprisingly given the power relations in the Selenga valley, fled on his way to Irkutsk.[916] It was no exaggeration for the *piatidesiatnik* Stepan Kazan' to claim that he could not accuse his tormentors before 1701, as he feared retaliation. Maksim Posel'skii was still in charge at Udinsk, serving part-time as an unsalaried *pod'iachii* in the *prikazchik*'s office; in this capacity he observed Kozma Kazanets' petitions, and he took no pains to give anything but a very distanced account which supported Beiton's case during investigation in Irkutsk.[917]

Although there is no judgement found in the file, it is fairly obvious in the opinion that Nikolev indicted Beiton for not taking *poruki* before he released Vasilii Tsynkov, a procedure prescribed by the 1649 *Ulozhenie* code of laws and explicitly cited by Lobanov and in the opinion. Kozma Kazanets, however, did not improve his case when he dishonoured Beiton and his father Afonasii in front of the judge, then left the voevoda's office during a confrontation while the court procedure was not finished. Thus sentence is likely to have been slight; nevertheless, taken together with the arrest of some major figures of the rebellion, among them Borisov, Fyk, Aleksei Uvarov and the Il'insk cossacks named above, the rule of the rebel *Personenverband* suffered a severe blow in 1701. Most of this was accomplished or at least initiated by regular local court procedure rather than by central orders, even as some of the following investigations proceeded in Eniseisk or Moscow.

Similar conclusions can be drawn if we look at the larger picture of the demise of the Selenga rebellion. Historians have stressed that it was "liquidated" from above once the new voevoda arrived in October 1698. In this version, the local impetus to pacification is called into question. Thus it is suggested that investigations started only after Nikolev arrived in Irkutsk, while the elected *sud'ia* Perfil'ev – acting as

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[915] RGADA, f.1121 op.1 no.457, ll.31 (report)
[916] Ibid. no.468, ll.70-77 (investigation)
[917] Ibid., ll.18 (investigation)

voevoda since the new voevoda had died during the journey, and only his immature son had arrived (see below) – allegedly did not dare to interfere with the Selenga rebels when Moscow ordered an investigation. Yet it was not Nikolev who launched this investigation; it had a much more complex prehistory. It was indeed the Siberian chancellery that decided first, on 1st December 1697 to have the perpetrations of both the voevoda and the rebels investigated; yet its decision took an estimated nine months to reach Irkutsk. Still without news of this decision, Udinsk cossacks planned to seize Sidor Shestakov's caravan in March. An atrocity during Shestakov's journey to China provoked confrontations between the *syn boiarskii* and the Nerchinsk cossacks, which resulted in his death. Yet even in this period there was no change in the typical *Personenverband* pattern of collaboration with their leaders and patrons. In March, too, another *syn boiarskii*, Petr Arsen'ev, hostile to the Udinsk *Personenverband* and proud of his connections at Peter's court, was elected *prikazchik* of Kabansk by the Selenginsk cossacks.[918] Only in Udinsk in the first week of Lent did the short-lived caprice of Borisov and his comrades develop a certain momentum. Under threat of being killed – Borisov and his advisors boasted that they would throw them in the water – the "fat" and "old" cossacks fled to live elsewhere.[919]

As already mentioned, Irkutsk cossacks did not side with voevoda Savelov because of his virtues, but rather on account of the lack of alternatives during the siege. When the wife of the relieving voevoda arrived at Irkutsk in 1697 all alone, apart from her young son, after the assigned voevoda Poltev had died during the journey, the cossacks did not allow Savelov to serve a second term. During the last week before Easter they accepted Semën Timofeevich Poltev as their new voevoda, and elected the aged, but experienced and respected Ivan Maksimov *syn* Perfil'ev *sud'ia* – a traditional institution in Irkutsk, also known from Krasnoiarsk and Pskov; but in this case effectively this was a kind of second voevoda, in view of the immature voevoda. After Moscow's letter of confirmation arrived, Perfil'ev proceeded to investigate Savelov's misdeeds in Irkutsk.[920] With regard to the

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[918] Aleksandrov, *Vlast'*, 324-5
[919] RGADA, f.1121 op.1 no.403, ll.4, 27 (investigation)
[920] Aleksandrov, *Vlast'*, 322-4

Selenga, he indeed was at first reluctant to take a stern approach. It is not clear whether it was still during the last days of Savelov's tenure of office or already on Perfil'ev's initiative, but at some stage in 1696/1697 Irkutsk cossacks supported the claims of the Selenga cossacks for more salary to be sent from Nerchinsk. There was obviously a keenly-felt need to appease the cossacks on the other side of the lake.[921]

In September 1697 Borisov's advisor Semen D'iakonov decided that the *prikazchik*'s rule should finally be abandoned. The background of his decision is not clear, and there may also be doubts about the sincerity of Novikov's report, claiming that after D'iakonov had appealed to the sovereign's deed, Borisov was deposed by "cossacks of all ranks". Afterwards, the *syn boiarskii* Novikov was elected *prikazchik* by "all the garrison" to rule and judge them until further notice by the Siberian chancellery.[922] Yet there are unmissable signs of broad dissatisfaction among the Udinsk cossacks – on 8th January 1698 a written petition was delivered at the Udinsk *prikazchik's* office, signed by "Udinsk *deti boiarskie*, mounted and foot cossacks and musketeers", claiming half their salary for the current year, which Borisov had not yet given them. According to Novikov, Borisov was reluctant to hand over the account books, asserting that he had no such thing. Already in December *syn boiarskii* Stepan Staisupov had accused Borisov of alienating the Udinsk share of 505 out of the total of 1,010 roubles sent from Nerchinsk for the Selenga cossacks' salaries under Staisupov's tutelage, which Borisov did not account for at all; there were also no accounts of distribution among cossacks.[923] This supports the view that it was highly unlikely that "the upper layer" of the cossacks all on their own and against the will of the majority deposed Borisov.

Poltev and Perfil'ev signed the instruction to Irkutsk *syn boiarskii* Andrei Savelev *syn* Moskvitinov in June 1698, which was probably not an accidental choice. Moskvitinov was connected to Turchaninov by events reaching back as far as 1678, when a court case reveals serious conflicts between the then ordinary cossack Moskvitinov and cossack Petr Studenitsyn. Their wives, Anna Sergeevna *doch* and Maritsa Ivanovna *doch* had quarrelled publicly, accusing each other of debauchery

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[921] RGADA, f.1121 op.1 no.88 ll.84-5 (rescript)
[922] Ibid. no.419 l.2 (petition)
[923] Ibid. no.88 ll.84-5 (rescript); no.145 l.56 (petition)

and serious dishonour. During the usual court proceedings, the plaintiff and the defendant had to agree on witnesses, which turned out to be difficult since several were not acceptable to Andrei Moskvitin who referred to earlier conflicts and dishonour. Among them were the wife of Elizar Sadovnikov and Katerina Turchaninova. Three generations of Turchaninovs are known to the records in Irkutsk between 1672 and 1720: Ivan Aleksandrov *syn*, his sons Grigorii, Gerasim, Leont'ei and Iakov, and grandson Terentei; all Turchaninovs in the records unequivocally relate to the same kin, with the only exception of Katerina. In 1682, which is highly suggestive, Petr Studenitsyn lived in the same neighbourhood as Iakov Turchaninov. Together with their comrades, cossacks who lived shoulder to shoulder – among them also a Sadovnikov – in that year they tried to deprive a peasant who lived in the vicinity of his land. Grigorii Konakov apprehended them on the voevoda's order with comrades. Konakov's wife had already severely disappointed Studenitsyn in 1678 in court by siding with Andrei Moskvitin.[924] Once again this shows that honour was an important resource throughout the Siberian frontier, where it was among the issues deciding the popularity of a leader. Cleavages such as these are indicative of groups linked by kinship, the *Personenverband* and patronage. It is therefore more than likely that Katerina's kin was to some degree inimical to Andrei Moskvitin at this early stage. Subsequent events during the aftermath of the Selenga rebellion suggest that with Moskvitin, Perfil'ev consciously chose a permanent foe of Turchaninov.

With regard to the Selenga rebels, Moskvitin was bound by clear government instructions. Rebels were to be accommodated, while only those who had perpetrated serious crimes ranging from murder and robbery to embezzlement were to be punished. Already in the very month Moskvitin was sent to the Selenga, investigation had commenced seriously in Il'insk and Udinsk – Lovtsov, Tarakanovskii and Rozgildeev made their statements; in early July such key figures as Maksim Posel'skii, Ivan Oshurkov, Pavel Padcrin, and the Il'insk rank-and-file added evidence. Poltev and Perfil'ev sent the first report on Borisov's irregularities and the Udinsk petitions including records of interrogations concerning the

[924] Ibid. no.33, l.90; op.2 no.74, ll.1-6 (investigations)

allegations against former voevoda Savelov and former *prikazchik* Turchaninov to the Siberian chancellery on 11th August, whereas only in October did the new voevoda, Nikolev, arrive in Irkutsk.[925] His presence reinvigorated investigations between 1699 and 1701, yet they had already started without him, and largely on account of the grievances of the Udinsk cossack discussed above, which were directed at their former elected *prikazchik*. Borisov's mishap as a *prikazchik* is hardly surprising. Once the Udinsk cossacks had returned from campaign, Borisov was thrown back on his closest entourage, since he could no longer promise unlimited opportunities for booty in wealthy Irkutsk, not to speak of the famed Amur. To show signs of accommodation increased their loyalty, but alienated those cossacks who were excluded from the narrowest circle. Since the rebellion gradually broke down by itself, there was little need to suppress or "liquidate" it from above. As with other Siberian town rebellions, it was a sign of good common sense to accommodate ordinary rebels, rather than a particularly cunning move by Peter I. There was much less continuity in the uprising than has heretofore been claimed; yet still there were many persons who remained in their position and wielded considerable power. The threat the old *Personenverband* constituted by the treaty agreeing on the "*dobroe delo*" posed to trade made sure that Moscow and Irkutsk had to accommodate demands raised on the Selenga, but it was also a *Personenverband* that asked for an investigation and partially overlapped with the former.

Grigorii Turchaninov's misdemeanours were also seriously investigated. Finally, in 1700/1701, when scores were settled on all sides, he had to pay 822 roubles to Selenginsk and Udinsk claimants. This considerable sum cannot be broken down, however, since Moskvitinov's proceedings only list claims, nowhere recording any attempt to corroborate them.[926] Due process in Muscovy relied on groupings of inhabitants in a similar vein to the early English jury.[927] The decision to investigate Turchaninov's misdemeanours and corrupt practices therefore meant, in a climate of persistent if somewhat weakened social cohesion in the *Personenverband*, Irkutsk's basic compliance with the Selenga demands. Unlike many Siberian voevodas,

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[925] Ibid. op.1 no.419, l.18 (instruction); no.403, ll.21-3, 48, 50, 56 (investigation); Aleksandrov, *Vlast'*, 325

[926] RGADA, f.1121 no.500, ll.23-4 (investigation)

[927] Weickhardt, "Due-Process", 479-80

Turchaninov's suffering lasted longer. He remained in prison until 1698/1699. Not even then did he receive his salary for his lost years. Only remuneration for 1698/1699 was granted on behalf of his petition in which he tried to incline voevoda Nikolev to mercy, hinting at his utter destitution. Similarly, Savelov could not escape prosecution; he was fined 4,000 roubles.[928] The rebellion had brought about lasting changes to patronage linkages in the Baikal area, and at least temporarily, Grigorii Turchaninov was not included in these alliances.

Conclusion

Rather than by divisions between social groups, rebellion on the Selenga was triggered by competition between different *Personenverbände* and towns. A tendency to seek the support of the central institutions and organisations was there long before the rebellion; it lasted during the rebellion and after it as well. It took different shapes and varied in arguments, but united all warring parties. However, this does not prove that the central state could rule in a despotic fashion or by a strategy of *divide et impera*. Rather, it had to rely on the strongest partner, or at times, on more than one, without being able to internally divide local agents like the rebellious *Personenverbände*. Moscow was thus more dependent on the good will of its local non-gentry partners than has hitherto been thought. One of the ways in which Moscow sought to enhance integration was the protection of honour. Repeating the general pattern, honour was based on the reputation among fellow cossacks and thus, related to political issues as it was, in practice depended more on competing, limited public spheres than on the tsar.

At the heart of the conflict in 1696-7 was negotiation and competition of the terms of trade – about who was eligible to what extent to be placed in an official position, and to receive or distribute subsidies. Rather than ousting all voevodas from Siberia, the quarrelling *Personenverbände* pursued different political strategies: one option was to build various, more equal than hierarchical, forms of patronage networks built on the local strength of the *Personenverband* in the trading frontier on the one hand, and the capacity of wealthy cossacks, nobles, monastery authority, local or central chancellery personnel, or merchant agents for advancing money and

[928] RGADA, f.1121 no.422 l.120 (petition); Aleksandrov, *Vlast'*, 326

soliciting the chancellery on behalf of the rebels on the other hand, with the aim of challenging the monopolies enjoyed by a voevoda or a competing town, such as Irkutsk. It was a negative aspect of the *Personenverband* under these conditions, on the other hand, that in case of a set-back such as the failure of the initial aspirations to rule Irkutsk from the Selenga, there was a strong impulse to break the law and allow unrestricted booty-making in order to preserve the authority of the cossack leader. While this had the unwanted disadvantage to seriously disrupt the flow of trade, and consequently led to the split in the *Personenverband*, another strategy consisted of the same elements, but adhered to due process and equal administration of justice. Despite apparent set-backs, this previously neglected tendency is observable from the onset of the rebellion, especially on the Selenginsk side of the split rebel *Personenverbände*, and it increasingly united the warring sides after the siege of Irkutsk throughout the late 1690s until the first decades of the eighteenth century, from the conflicts over the treatment of Turchaninov and the *ostrog* Il'insk, to the local initiatives in delivering the errant former leaders of the rebellion, and finally to the individual statements in the centrally ordered investigation concerning the cases of members of the *Personenverband* and outsiders "bribing" the voevoda for their recruitment in Selenginsk and Udinsk in 1720.[929] After the confrontation with the Buryats over the issue of their ancestral possession of the Kudinsk steppe had proven disruptive to the point of deposing the *prikazchik*, a new balance was sought in the aftermath of the rebellion. On the one hand, significant demands of the Buriats were fulfilled when Andrei Beiton became *prikazchik* in Udinsk, who on the other hand yielded to the trade-related demands of members of the former rebel *Personenverband.* His trial, although he was eventually acquitted, is another sign of the tendency towards due process and equal justice.

Moscow pursued this strategy by sending the capable administrator Nikolev, who, despite his reputed leaning toward the former rebels observed the rules of the process and thus promoted the inner peace that was needed for smooth trading operations. Nevertheless, local agents like the elected official (*sud'ia*) Perfil'ev or cossacks on the Selenga successfully initiated this policy, which was only then

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[929] Cut due to word limit: RGADA f.214 kn.1619 ll.13-100 (investigation)

sustained by central agents. The rebels – except for a few of the most recently recruited and most severely socially dislocated cossacks, who could gain more in robbery – opted for denouncing and delivering their former leaders when it turned out that they did not sufficiently advance inner peace and stability while the relevant central decree only reached the Baikal area after their decision. A side effect of this step was a weakening of the *Personenverband*, since investigation was then conducted individually rather than collectively. This policy was promoted by the successes of the rebels in trade, by the promising perspectives in trade with China, and by the timely inclination of Irkutians to compromise. Thus, local elite and cossack agents sought central support in a situation with promising perspectives that critically involved local affairs, but also those of the empire as a whole. This explains why the centre found it difficult to seize initiative, while local aspirations took the ascendancy.

International trade remained restricted by Peter's attempts at imposing a monopoly operated by Moscow merchants, yet this was a common situation in distant territories isolated from the direct influence of the centres of early modern states. As was the case in other, comparable territories, local merchants bought into this lucrative trade by bribing the voevoda or *prikazchik* for their sons or relatives to be recruited in Selenginsk or Udinsk.[930] This practice also contributed to lower levels of conflict between cossacks and voevodas. While wealthy cossacks increasingly sought to join the *posad*[931], their relatives and other cossacks who acted as their agents in the caravan and abroad became more dependent on the merchants. Similarly, Nerchinsk, situated at a comparable dead end as the Selenga towns but thriving on trade until 1703, was reluctant on all but moderate terms to join the rebel movement; overall, it was rather opposed to the cause of the Selenga. Yet Nerchinsk suffered little from the changing path of the caravans. After 1703, mining activities replaced a good part of its former dependence on trade.[932]

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[930] Ibid.
[931] Leont'eva, *Sluzhilye*, 287
[932] Aleksandrov, *Vlast'*, 301-2

Conclusion

Much more than has been thought until very recently the Muscovite empire was dependent on local forces, elites and groups that sought the collaboration of the tsar and central institutions and organisations to bolster their own influence. They increasingly sought central support as local affairs became more and more involved in the affairs of empire by heightened mobility of land and people, and augmented dependency of local elites on interregional trade and regulation.[933] While Kivelson has recently demonstrated that the provincial gentry could influence government decisions on their behalf, this study proves that there were other, non-noble groups, such as the Siberian cossacks, that wielded similar powers. The findings of this thesis add further weight to a number of recent studies which have changed significantly the overall conception of centre-periphery relations in Muscovy.

The cossack *Personenverband* was a suitable power basis for the Siberian cossacks to influence political decisions in their favour since it was adapted to frontier conditions, as a temporary primary group oriented towards specific aims rather than the acquisition or maintenance of social status, but was not based on kinship relations and could therefore flexibly respond to the changing demands of service and trade. The cossack *Personenverband* therefore was the most cost-efficient organisation capable of protecting valuable government transports in frontier conditions. The regular army was never sent in, partly because it quickly would have exhausted resources brought from Muscovy at great expense, partly because it was less efficient in protecting transports in the steppe environment than cossacks, and partly because of the danger to the tsar's main objective in Siberia, the furs that inevitably would have proven too tempting for any superior force sent to Siberia; providing the material means for such an army to go to Siberia inevitably meant that they acquired the opportunity to enrich themselves. In sum, a force capable of overcoming the rebels was never worth the costs of its deployment and would have interrupted trade and the provision of fur-tribute to a greater degree than any voevoda or rebels. This and the bottlenecks created by frontier conditions reinforced by the authority of the *Personenverband* over transports and the right to

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[933] Lieberman, "Introduction", 455-6

give advice to their commander and the tsar's representative, the voevoda, generated a favourable basis for negotiations with him and with Moscow. From these negotiations sprang a whole system of privileges that were made conditional on service achievements, but were allotted flexibly and mostly locally by the voevoda – or by rebels – on a case-to-case basis to individual cossacks and cossack groups. These grants and credit agreements of up to three years promoted trade and expansion and made especially the rank-and-file cossacks who protected transports fundamentally interested in all matters of trade. As a consequence, to ensure the smooth functioning of the system that was so vital for the tsar's revenues and in particular as the Siberian fur provided ready convertibles for financing wider military reforms, the cossacks received their salary in a regular fashion that was uncommon in the early modern period.

Another consequence of these conditions was that cossacks on the one hand became actively interested in due process of law to ensure reliability in trade relations. On the other hand, due to the way the *Personenverband* was constituted, conflict with due process was programmed, especially when the terms of trade were perceived to be unjust. Differences of opinion were argued out in the public spheres of reviews and cossack assemblies on campaign, in the town square, or in the church refectory. These public spheres were limited thematically by service issues but not by accessibility – members of other social groups also took part in campaigns and deliberations, although the cossacks were usually decisive if only by virtue of their absolute numerical predominance in seventeenth-century Siberian towns. Other institutionalised concepts, such as honour, although the tsar guaranteed and the voevoda in the last instance judged it, referred to this limited cossack public deciding over such essential issues as eligibility for prestigious and lucrative service assignments; by means of election, cossacks guaranteed the honour of the elected and gave them an instrument to claim their right to return from long-term service assignments.

In the last instance, however, all Siberian cossacks sought to exchange wares with Moscow. Only a common institutional culture could guarantee the smooth functioning and reliability of internal and external trade relations. In particular, Mongol princes accepted the tsar as an equal "Chinggisid", while they perceived

cossacks as illegal traitors as soon as they were not in the tsar's service and therefore refused them the right to trade. Universal service was the overriding principle in the Muscovite empire, not, as for example in France, the preservation of estate privileges.[934] In Siberia, concepts of service therefore became embedded in the language of cossack trade and the sovereign's affair, meaning in this context primarily the tsar's – mainly financial – interests and the corresponding tasks his servitors, the cossacks, chancellery personnel, and the voevodas were obliged to carry out, developed into the main institution of their trade. Institutions put the symbolical order and permanence of an organisation on display, although this order is naturally more likely to break down than to endure. To enhance reliability and permanence, any institution and especially the sovereign's affair depends on an element of illusion – those who adhere to it ritually, regularly confirm to each other that it is derived from pure and authentic sources, that is from the sovereign's decrees and interests even where the association is tenuous at best, for example in the case of formal deposition. Thus, at least in the Siberian case, the theory of institutionality helps to contextualise the elements of illusion in the sovereign's affair, noticed but hardly understood by contemporary and modern observers, in a setting dominated by trade. With regard to the sovereign's word and affair, Lukin has recently cautioned that "illusion" is a judgmental term, which should not be used in historical accounts,[935] but here it is used analytically to explain reliability. This derivation from the "pure" source also made independent cossack actions, which they regularly claimed to be in accordance with the institution, that is the tsar's interests or "profit", impregnable with regard to investigations and the sovereign's justice. Where in some early modern republics limited public spheres were structured and focused by symbols of community,[936] in Siberia – although in rebellions they sometimes cropped up as well, such as the *karshi* in Udinsk – the sovereign's affair provided analogous functions in the Siberian partitioned and public spheres limited by service issues. As a set of related norms, expectations and patterns of behaviour, this institution provided resources of power actors could make use of in the pitched semi-

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[934] Lieberman, "Introduction", 455-6
[935] Lukin, *Predstavleniia*, 255
[936] Meier, Ulrich, "Die Sicht- und Hörbarkeit der Macht. Der Florentiner Palazzo Vecchio im Spätmittelalter", in Rau (ed.), *Taverne*, 229-272; Dörk, "verwilderte Raum", 124-9

public battles for information and control that were characteristic of seventeenth-century Siberia. These relatively open debates, often attracting non-cossacks too, corresponded to the first, inclusive phase of a cossack *Personenverband* before its aims were agreed unanimously and the leader was elected successively, or when the group disagreed with its leader.

Since social relations are unstable, and Siberian society was particularly unstable due to its economic dynamism and territorial expansion, an institution established to stabilise social relations also had to adapt. To facilitate this adaptation, but at the same time keep to its authentic sources in appearance, conflict is expressed by way of leitideas. Leitideas set certain – often contradictory – elements of laws, decrees, instructions, and custom considered to be related to the institution, above others and made them temporarily, locally, or in a given social group obligatory according to the needs of that group or an interregional network of patronage that could include cossacks, merchants (*gosti*), and nobles. The sovereign's affair was also an article in the law code of 1649, which in the form of chancellery writs was in force even before that date, and protected the honour and integrity of the tsar. Accordingly, the litigant was transferred to Moscow immediately and thus removed from the influence of local authorities. The Siberian cossacks introduced a leitidea of deposition (*otkaz*) derived from cossack *Personenverband* custom, which had an interesting status: the Tobol'sk archbishops had institutionalised it and the tsar had endorsed it, but it never became imperial law. Although it was not considered legal by the tsar, the local power of the *Personenverband* meant that it was unimpeachable at least as long as the cossacks guaranteed not to deliver each other to impending investigation. As far as we know, this quasi-legal status of deposition in Siberia was unique in the Muscovite empire, where otherwise, as Lukin has recently stressed, limitations of the power of the tsar – or his representative – rested exclusively on moral images without institutionalised leverage. A further difference to Muscovy west of the Urals is evident in the personal, denounciatory character of virtually all cases of the sovereign's word or affair, which were moreover usually directed against persons of lower status, as compared to the mostly – limited – public character of petitions that

referred to this institution in Siberia typically indicting persons of more exalted status.[937]

Besides, the practice of non-deliverance reinforced one of the major institutions of Muscovy, collective responsibility. For the same reason, cossacks signed petitions collectively, thereby constituting a *Personenverband*. Signing the collective petition and, occasionally, secret oaths of mutual allegiance and non-deliverance, corresponded to the second, exclusive phase of the *Personenverband* characterised by isolation in the frontier and steppe environment, purposefulness, and temporarily-disappearing individuality as the collectively-delivered signatures and statements in investigation show. As an institutional mechanism providing appeal to the tsar that promoted an organised *Personenverband*, the sovereign's affair was used in almost all of the frequent town rebellions, and on numerous other occasions of lesser importance, in small fortresses, on campaigns or among members of a cossack group. Some of the Siberian cases, especially minor ones, are probably still buried in the archives, though the known evidence is already impressive.

There is a correspondence between the recent turn to institutionality in the social sciences and the history of the Siberian seventeenth century. It is a symptom of perceived crisis and related fears that spawned from the transformation of Eastern Europe, globalisation and other recent social and cultural processes on the one hand, and on the other hand from the Muscovite Time of Troubles and the rebellious seventeenth century, though of course more generally such fears were incited in Europe by a century in the throes of internal war. Already the Institutionalism of Arnold Gehlen[938] was impelled by the Hobbesian fear of the dissolution of all order and the natural human condition of club-law – embracing institutions as a safe harbour from human degeneration ("*Entartung*").[939] Cossacks in Siberia as well as their opponents constantly referred to the Time of Troubles, claiming for each side that it had stemmed and was still stemming the tide of anarchy while generally accepting the tsar as pacifier.

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[937] Lukin, *Predstavleniia*, 253-4; Rowland, "Limits?", 125-55

[938] Rehberg, Karl-Siegbert (ed.), *Der Mensch* [by A. Gehlen], in: *Arnold Gehlen Gesamtausgabe*, Vol.3, Frankfurt/Main 1993; Gehlen, Arnold, *Anthropologische und sozialpolitische Untersuchungen*, Reinbek 1986

[939] Rehberg, Karl-Siegbert, "Institutionenwandel und Funktionsveränderung des Symbolischen", in: Göhler, Gerhard (ed.), *Institutionenwandel*, Opladen 1997, 94-120, here: 98

As cultural determinations of orientation, institutions have a pacifying function. Thus, one of the great institutions of the post-medieval world, the state, developed exactly in this perspective as a fixation of civil war, receiving an important impulse in Muscovy in the aftermath of the Time of Troubles. This is not a retrospective issue, but already the basis of Jean Bodin's theory of sovereignty.[940] In Muscovy this took root without known transfer of these terms, more or less autonomously. Elias's theory of civilisation can be read in this way, too: the development of the princely, later state monopoly that successfully put through its norms against the partial economic and social powers, the estates, albeit, as we have seen, in Muscovy the estates were less powerful and the prince still could not achieve this without their collaboration. This is the background on which Elias sees his theory of civilisation, which could not develop without repression or force, but had a pacifying effect.[941] In Siberia, in a rough-and-ready frontier world, institutionalisation also had a pacificatory effect, although it cannot be overlooked that its most efficient regional harbinger was the cossack *Personenverband*, straddling the divide between pre-modern and modern, as well as not fitting comfortably the concept of an elite power-group.

In the debate about social disciplining, the "plebeian" variant of the process of civilisation, recent appraisals of Moscow and Russia have adopted a rather negative attitude to the concept,[942] although they have also identified potential islands of an increased consciousness of law among the population, such as in the manufactories at Tula or in the central Muscovite regions.[943] This study does not claim to be an investigation of the implementation of criminal law in Siberia; it can only suggest lines of enquiry towards the aim of an appreciation of the development of social discipline in Siberia. Schmidt's findings are conclusive at least for the city of Moscow in the eighteenth century, probably much of European Russia, not least, as he stresses, owing to the development of serfdom, the concomitant monopolisation of justice by the noble landowner, and resulting waves of migration,[944] which did not

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[940] Ibid., 99
[941] Elias, Norbert, *Die höfische Gesellschaft*, 1969
[942] Behrisch, Lars, "Social Discipline in Early Modern Russia", in: Schilling, Heinz, *Institutionen, Instrumente und Akteure sozialer Kontrolle und Disziplinierung*, Frankfurt/Main 1999, 325-357
[943] Schmidt, *Sozialkontrolle*, 405
[944] Ibid., 13, 397-8

find an equivalent in Siberia.[945] Criticising Oestreich's concept of social discipline as lopsidedly oriented at the promulgation of law – although he also emphasises the positive aspects of this concept – instead of at its effects, Schmidt has underlined the importance of dialogic, inclusive, absolute, and formal law for the formal (effectiveness of prosecution) and informal (consciousness of law) aspects of social discipline, all of which were largely absent in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century central Russia. The same was true for the replacement of negotiation with authority, and innovation in law seeping away in distant parts. However, as the Siberian results of cossack negotiation prove, distance is not an absolute category; its effects depend on the social, economic and cultural framework, and in particular, on the distribution of resources of power and the capability to use them. The appreciation Siberian cossacks showed for due process of law at least in their political struggles, for precedence in negotiation, for the limited public in dealing with authority, as well as the late developments towards individualisation[946] in the procedure of investigation provide some clues for the resolution of the question as to whether there was an urge towards more individual reliability and responsibility in social relations in parts of Siberia that eventually transcended the isolationist confines of the *Personenverband*. Trade, especially since it involved a great part of the population, had a pacifying effect, notwithstanding the fact that the Russians who arrived there were more rough and ready than civilised.

The downside of this relatively positive evaluation of Siberia is that the efforts to meet cossack needs had to be financed – and in cash-starved Muscovy this meant that the peasants of the north of Russia were milked beyond their means. Thus, although this is usually overlooked, beyond the importance of the fur trade for purchasing weapons and instructors abroad, the liberties and privileges of the Siberian cossacks affected the general development of Russia. The "Siberian supply" tribute in grain was among the more ominous reasons for increasing pressures for enserfment in European Russia and for peasants to desert northern villages and

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[945] In 1662, Siberia's proportion of exiles among the Russian population was at just 10.5 per cent, just above one tenth of what Australia experienced: Wood, Alan, "Russia's "Wild East': Exile, Vagrancy and Crime in Nineteenth-Century Siberia", in: idem, *Siberia*, 117-39, here: 117-8

[946] Ludwig Steindorff arrives at a similarly guarded conclusion regarding the noble memoria in sixteenth- to seventeenth-century Muscovy: "Wer sind die Meinen?", in: Bessmertny, Yuri (ed.), *Das Individuum und die Seinen*, Göttingen 2001, 231-258

therefore, problems with social discipline; also, the practice of internal redistribution of fuel exports accompanied Russian history until very recently. Thus making the frontier safer, contributed to the undermining of social control in Russia's older regions.

With continued expansion in the eighteenth century, the cossacks moved to the south and east and important towns were inevitably now situated further and further from the steppe frontier, and less in need of locally-garrisoned protection. With increased security, trade became the monopoly of the merchants, while many wealthy cossacks converted to their ranks. The *Personenverband* was thus removed from the centres of decision and administration and deprived of its former economic and political significance not least by the decrease in importance of the fur tribute. Since there are only a very few narrowly-focused studies on the eighteenth century[947], we may conclude that the evidence of further development is contradictory, although it eventually resulted in the last quarter of the eighteenth century in a regionalism that was loyal to the tsar, and, compared to most parts of European Russia, in an early and vigorous educational and reading revolution featuring schools and intellectual circles that published general-interest magazines voicing Siberian lay culture to itself and to the rest of the empire. Remarkably continuing and echoing the lines of development highlighted in the present study, business-minded local merchants and administrators rather than the usual gentry supported and organised this cultural upsurge.[948]

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[947] But see Zuev, A.S., *Russkoe kazachestvo Zabaikal'ia vo vtoroi chetverti XVIII – pervoi polovine XIX vv.*, Novosibirsk 1994; *Istoriia kazachestva Aziatskoi Rossii* vol I: *XVI-pervaia polovina XIX veka*, otv. red. V.V. Alekseev, Ekaterinburg 1995; Minenko, Nina A. (red.), *Kazaki Urala i Sibiri v XVII-XX vv.: Sbornik nauchnykh trudov*, Ekaterinburg 1993

[948] According to Gary Marker, Tobol'sk stood out among contemporaneous provincial publishing initiatives, and it could already look back on local literary life prior to 1790: *Publishing, Printing, and the Origins of Intellectual Life in Russia, 1700-1800*, Princeton 1985, 135-151, esp. 144-6, 150. See the recent discovery of copies of the first Russian newspaper in a provincial backwater of Petrine era European Russia that was situated on the road to Siberia: Waugh, Daniel (D.K.Uo), *Istoriia odnoi knigi. Viatka i "nesovremennost'" v russkoi kul'ture petrovskogo vremeni*, St. Petersburg 2002

Glossary

1 *altyn*	Six *den'ga* or three kopeks
amanat	Official captives who lived in the forts and towns to ensure their relatives paid the *iasak*. Antecedents of this institution existed in steppe tradition
ataman	Leader of a cossack group. Origin probably Turkish, referring to the head of a kin group. Traditional cossack rank preserved among Siberian cossacks.
1 quarter (*chetvert'*)	146.4 or 164.7 kg (4 or 4 ½ pud) for the period before 1710.
Den'ga	0.5 kopek
Deti boiarskie	Pl. of *syn boiarskii*
desiatnik	Official cossack rank, literally: "Leader of ten cossacks", though a group led by a *desiatnik* was not necessarily ten strong.
doshchanik	Flat-bottomed transport vessel; length of the keel up to 21.6 m.[949]
godovalshchik	Cossack serving a year in a distant fort or town
gorodnichii	Town governor
gosti	Wealthy Moscow merchants
guliashchie liudi	People not attached to any *tiaglo*, and therefore free to move from place to place; usually they were itinerant workers
iasak	Tribute, in Siberia usually furs, sometimes also cattle or other herds. According to region, way of life and custom, it was collected as a regular tax or considered an irregular tax. The latter meant it was a form of barter, with the use of force by both parties or the protection offered by the Russians accounted for in the terms of trade.
iasaul	Elected cossack leader
iasyr'	Cossack captives taken on campaign, whom cossacks were allowed to keep according to custom, but not by law.
igumen	Abbot
kabala	Agreement exacting obligation of labour for a creditor in case of non-payment of debt
kormlenie	Alimentation; as form of service remuneration collected, paid and controlled locally by the community or the voevoda
1 *lan*	(Chinese monetary unit) = 9 *zolotnikov* = 38,34 grams

[949] Vershinin, E.V., "Doshchanik i koch v zapadnoi Sibiri (XVII v.)", in: *Issledovaniia*, Moscow 1989, 95

litva	Originally a special unit made up of prisoners of war from Poland-Lithuania; later, Russians were also included in the litva ranks.
mestnichestvo	System of places (ranks) of Muscovite nobles
odinachnaia zapis', also: *zaodinachnaia zapis'*	Written resolution stipulating not to hand over each other during investigation
okolnichi	Second *duma* rank
otkaz	Deposition of the voevoda by the cossacks
(cossack) *Personenverband*, (pl.) *verbände*	Specific cossack form of primary group, constituted according to changing occasions, aims or needs to survive in a steppe frontier environment. Open to virtually anyone when it was constituted, it became exclusive and obliged its members to keep faith to the stated group aim once a consensus was reached among prospective members. Leaders were not socially exalted and the group controlled them, since external social relations had little bearing on isolated groups in the frontier. In Siberian reality this largely self-contained "ideal type" interacted in various ways with Muscovite institutions.
piatidesiatnik	Official cossack rank, literally "Leader of fifty cossacks", though a unit led by a *piatidesiatnik* was not necessarily fifty strong.
pismennyi golova	Officer capable of keeping records such as compiling statistics and attending to official communication; a high-ranking official, but not necessarily reserved for Moscow nobles; could be assigned voevoda in the voevoda's absence.
pod''iachii	Undersecretary
pod''iachii s pripis'iu	Clerical official assigned for record-keeping and other clerical work, associate of the voevoda similar to a second voevoda though not necessarily a noble.
posad	Community of townsmen
prikaznaia izba, or: *prik. palata*	Voevoda's office
prikazchik	Head of administration in small forts; assigned by the voevoda
prisud	When parts of Siberia became more densely settled in the end of the seventeenth century, local towns, forts and villages formed *prisudy*; the local voevoda held court in the town of the *prisud*, for example in Irkutsk.
promyshlenniki	Hunters and trappers
1 *pud*	36.6 kg

Razriad	Military chancellery keeping the service rolls which also appointed voevodas.
razriad-town or -voevoda	The first and second level of Siberian administration, comprising Tobol'sk on the first level and Tomsk, Eniseisk and Iakutsk (and for several years in the 1680s, Verkhotur'e) on the second. The nominally subordinated towns often disputed their position in vital civil issues since there was only a formal hierarchy in military affairs. The Siberian chancellery maintained regular communications with all Siberian towns, while *razriad*-voevodas had largely nominal control, which was most effective in urgent military affairs, sometimes in public investigations and otherwise was often by-passed. Moscow introduced the *razriady* largely to regulate disputes between towns and their voevodas and to enhance defence.
1 rouble = 10 *grivny* = 100 kopeks = 200 *den'gi*; 6 *den'gi* = 1 *altyn*	A rough rule is that 1 rouble corresponded to 1 ducat or 5 Dutch gulden. For extensive information on price relations, refer to Hellie, *Material Culture.*
s''ezzhaia izba	One of two terms for the voevoda's office; literally translated the 'riding-together [meeting] house'. The other term being the *prikaznaia izba.*
smuta	Time of Troubles (1605-1612). Also used locally as a term describing unwanted turmoil.
sotnik	Official cossack rank; literally "Leader of hundred cossacks", though a unit led by a *sotnik* was not necessarily a hundred strong..
stol'nik	Last rank of the Moscow list beneath the duma ranks.
sud'ia	Head of a chancellery in Moscow. During rebellions also elected "judges" who headed the town administration.
syn boiarskii	Hereditary rank. Close to cossacks due to their similar tasks and appointment from among the latter, though better paid and more frequently appointed to responsible tasks. Not identical with European Russian *syn boiarskii.*
tseloval'nik	Elected official, responsible for collecting taxes
ukaz	Decree, writ
voevoda / first and second	Governor. The voevodas assigned to a town formed a collegiate (*tovaryshchi*); instructions formally advised colleagues to decide harmoniously, "in good advice". Until 1682, *mestnichestvo* regulated who had the say among colleagues.

zimov'e	'winter-hut', blockhouse with a small window for collecting or bartering the fur tax, minimising direct contact of the cossacks with the native hunters and thus, risk of being overpowered.
zipun'	(Originally Tatar) silken shirt allowing arrows to be extracted more easily. Also for Tatar booty and captives.
1 *zolotnik*	Coin: 4,26 grams

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Abbreviations

AI	Akty istoricheskie sobrannye i izd. Arkheograficheskoiu komm.
CASS	Canadian-American Slavic Studies
ChIOIDR	Chtenia v imperatorskom obshchestve istorii i drevnostei Rossiiskikh
CPS	Comparative Political Studies
FzOG	Forschungen zur Osteuropäischen Geschichte
GG	Geschichte und Gesellschaft
HZ	Historische Zeitschrift
HdGR	Handbuch der Geschichte Rußlands
IZ	Istoricheskie zapiski
JAH	Journal of Asian History
JBGO	Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas
JEMH	Journal of Early Modern History
MAS	Modern Asian Studies
OI	Otechestvennaia istoriia
PSRL	Polnoe sobranie russkikh letopisei
RGADA	Rossiiskii arkhiv drevnikh aktov
RH	Russian History
RIB	Russkaia Istoricheskaia Biblioteka
RR	Russian Review
SEER	Slavonic and Eastern European Review
SR	Slavic Review
SRIa	Slovar' russkogo iazyka XI-XVII vv.
VI	Voprosy Istorii
ZfG	Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft
ZhMNP	Zhurnal Ministerstva Narodnogo Prosveshcheniia

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Illustration I: Procession of Russian ambassadors with their train of merchants bearing bundles of forty sable furs at the Reichstag at Regensburg in 1576. Merchants acquired these furs either in Moscow or directly in Siberia. Woodcut by Michael Peterle, 16th century.

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Illustration II: Reception of Ermak's cossack envoys by Ivan the Terrible in the imagination of the Tobol'sk cartographer, cossack and *syn boiarskii* S.U. Remezov more than a century after the events depicted. Despite the slight exaltation of Ermak (left, above), the representation of the cossack group – especially its formation closed to the outside and same-size of the members – testifies to the author's intimate knowledge of such groups. The person handing the letter to Ivan is a courtier or clerk.

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Map: Russian Expansion in Siberia. Foundation dates show the dramatic speed of exploration and conquest.

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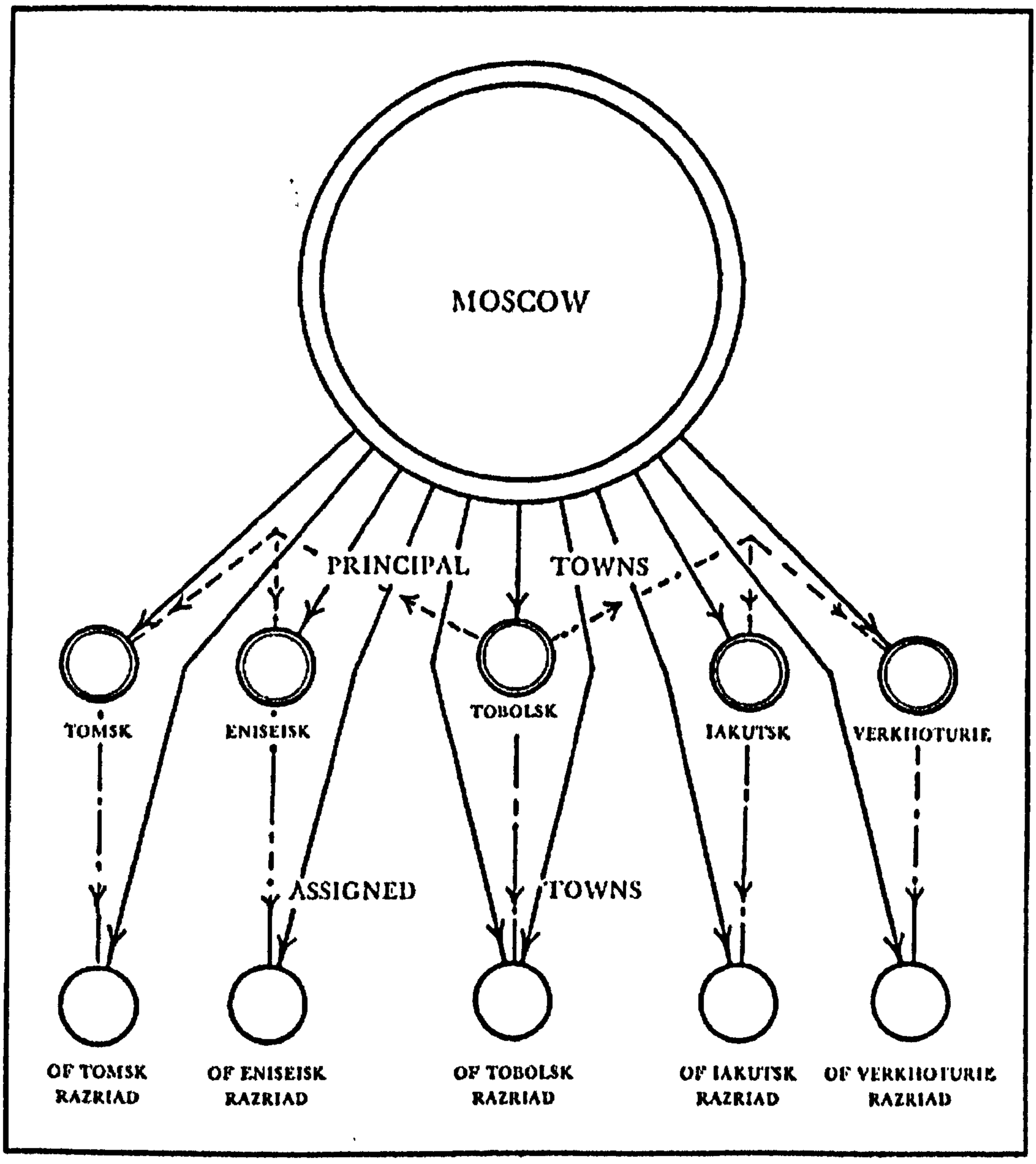

ADMINISTRATIVE HIERARCHY OF SIBERIAN TOWNS

Illustration III

In: Lantzeff, *Siberia*


МОРЕ
БАЙКАЛЪ
Гра
ИРКУЦКОЙ
IRCUTSCOY
Ангара
Рѣка
Р. Кудара
Р. Кидала
Р. Тонка
Р. Куда
Р. Ода
Р. Китои
Р. Кирма
Р. Кая
Р. Харлх
Р. Тогана
Р. Ельва
Р. Малтон
Р. Куй
Р. Ку
Р. Ка
Р. Ка
Р. Ка